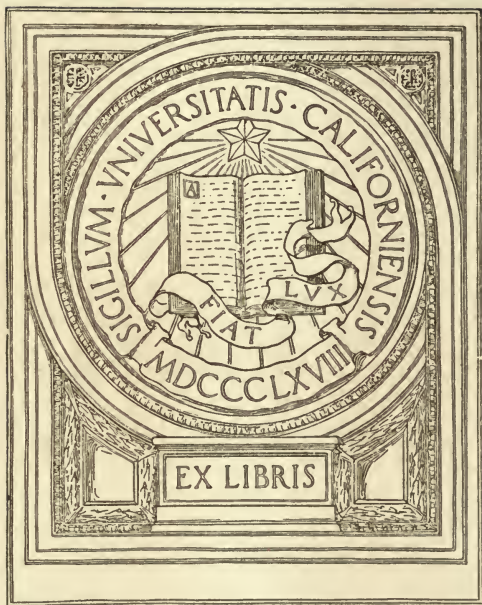
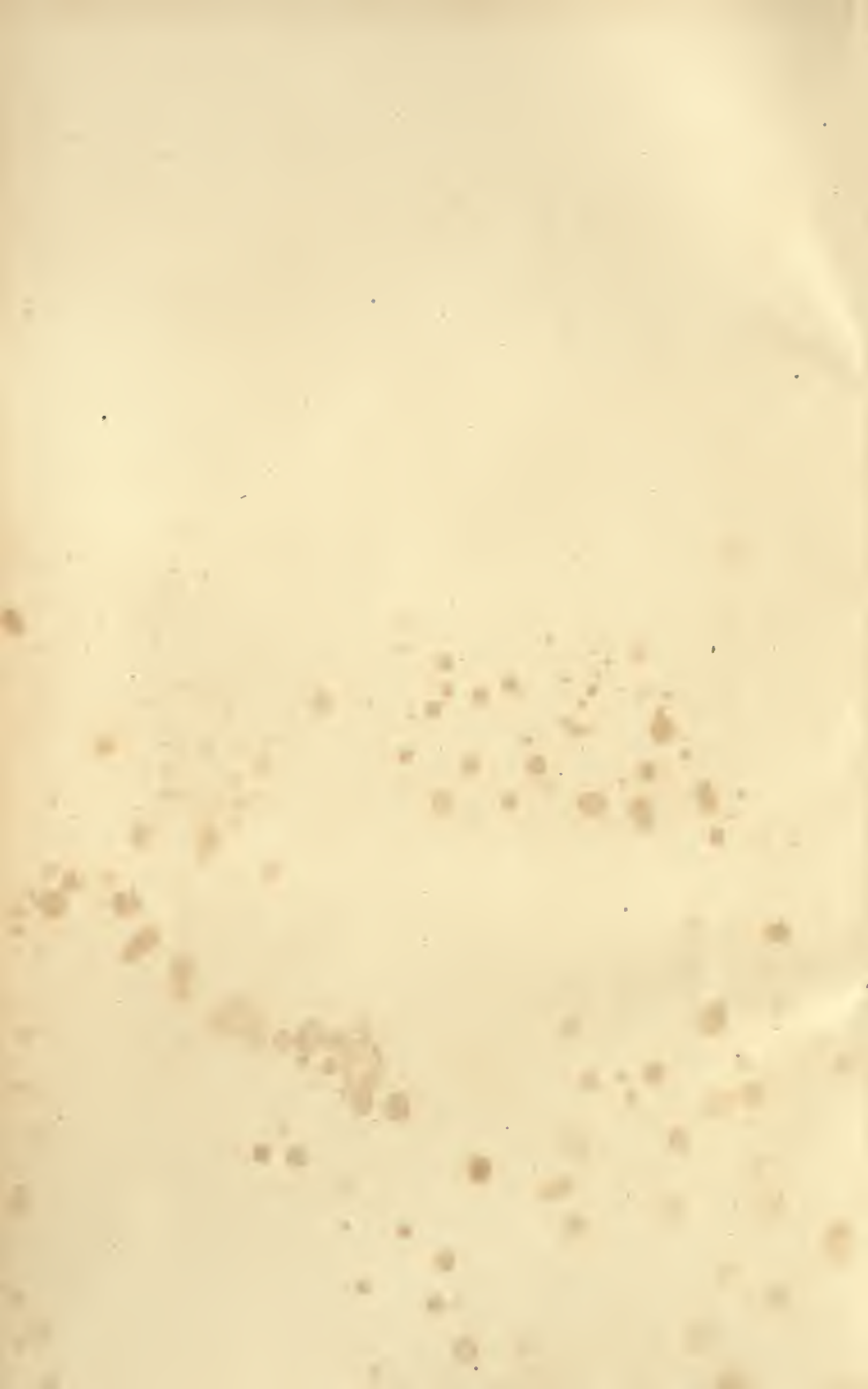




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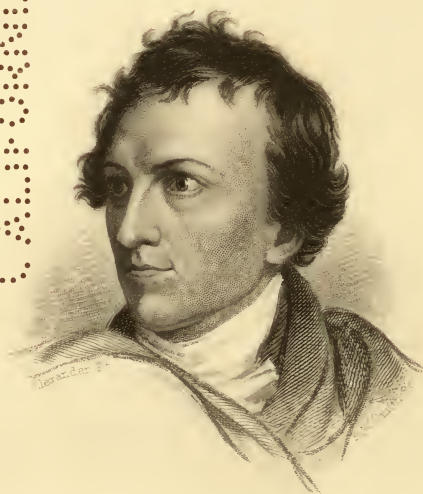








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Yours respectfully
J. F. Percival

THE
LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES GATES PERCIVAL
BY
JULIUS H. WARD



BOSTON
TICKNOR AND FIELDS
1866



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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER.



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hands, with the request that I should write his life. When I began the work, several years later, amid the pressing engagements of a parish priest, my progress was slow and discouraging. I had never seen or known the poet; and had not his friends generously and confidingly come to my aid, and given me their kind assistance, I could not have gone on. Indeed, my work has been mainly and chiefly the editing of the poet's own letters and papers, and the reminiscences of those who knew him intimately. Much material was furnished by the partially prepared memoir of the late Erasmus D. North, M. D., whose work, had his life been spared, would have been a far more complete delineation of the poet than mine. His surviving brother has freely imparted to me facts concerning his earlier life. His friends in New Haven, Professor Noah Porter, the late Professor Silliman, the late Edward C. Herrick, Professor James D. Dana, the late Professor Goodrich, Henry White, William G. Webster, Benjamin Noyes, Charles Monson, and Mrs. Aaron N. Skinner have assisted me whenever they could; and I am indebted to many other citizens, whose names I am not permitted to give, for essential help. To Professor George Ticknor,

and specially to Professor William C. Fowler, who procured for me the correspondence with Dr. Hayward, and to Professor Charles U. Shepard, who kindly allowed me to use his article in the *Atlantic* for July, 1859, I am under great obligations. William C. Bryant, Fitz-Greene Halleck, and Mrs. Louisa C. Tuthill have each supplied important materials. His Western friends, Edward M. Hunter, Lyman C. Draper, and J. L. Jenckes, M. D., have spared no pains to furnish me with valuable information; and many whose names I have given, and many whose names are omitted, have done this voluntarily, from the respect they had to the memory of Percival. I must here, in a general way, acknowledge the materials which I have taken here and there, often without mention, from magazines and newspapers, though I must specially refer to an article in the *New Englander* for May, 1859, by Edward W. Robbins of Kensington, Connecticut. Had it not been for such ready assistance, the work could never have been written.

I have not sought to conceal the peculiarities of Percival, or to tone down every expression which relates to others, though I have not intended to print what would cause pain to any

one. To give a plain and true narrative of the poet as he lived and labored has been my only aim and purpose; and I cannot part with a work which has engaged me for nearly a decade of years, and which, in the providence of God, I have been spared to complete, without saying that, with all my studies of Percival,—and I believe there is not much more to be known,—the simple reverence for his genius and attainments which I had in boyhood has increased with a riper knowledge of his character.

J. H. W.

S. PETER'S RECTORY,
CHESHIRE, CONN., July 17, 1866.





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LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES GATES PERCIVAL.

CHAPTER I.

1795 - 1809.

BIRTH AND EARLY HOME. — PARENTAGE. — A SCHOOL-BOY. —
EARLY TASTES. — FONDNESS FOR BOOKS. — DEATH OF HIS
FATHER. — AT SCHOOL IN HEMPSTEAD. — EARLY MENTAL TROU-
BLES. — PREPARING FOR COLLEGE.



JAMES GATES PERCIVAL was born in
Kensington Parish, in the town of ^{Birth.}
Berlin, Connecticut, according to his
own handwriting, "Tuesday forenoon, Sept.
15, 1795."

The house of his birth is still standing. It is a plain
wooden building, bordering close upon the street, ^{House}
with a long sloping roof in the rear, — a style of ^{where born.}
dwelling which our ancestors brought from England. It
has now quite other tenants, and its shattered windows
and uneven roof and weather-beaten paint show the
marks of age. It is situated in one of the most romantic
and charming regions in Connecticut. Near at hand is
the parish church, standing on an elevated site, in the

shade of fine old trees of buttonwood and oak, its low steeple cropping out just above their tops ; in front of the house and over the way is an orchard slope ; around it are patches of mowing and pasture ; and at its foot is a beautiful sheet of water, which turns several mills in its progress, and then dashes over the rocks, and winds away among green meadows. Farm-houses are scattered everywhere among the neighboring eminences and in the valley. The whole neighborhood is remarkable for the rich and varied beauty of its scenery. There are the waving swells of sandstone, interrupted and crowned by picturesque precipices of trap, "with scattered groves and wooded hills." Overlooking the house is a rounded hill of considerable height, from the top of which can be seen a wide country around, with its villages and spires : in the west is Southington Mountain ; extending southward are the Blue Hills of Meriden, with their soft and varied outline ; and away in the southeast rises Mount Lamentation, memorable for a mournful legend which gave it its name. Within this circuit are many quiet pastoral scenes. They are beautifully pictured in Percival's own lines : —

" Groves darkly green, white farms, and pastures gay
With flowers, — brooks stealing over sand
Or smooth-worn pebbles, murmuring light away, —
Blue rye-fields, yielding to the gentle hand
Of the cool west-wind, — scented fields of hay,
Falling in purple bloom, — free hearts that feel
Their being doubled in their country's weal."

" Among the influences which should be mentioned as having moulded the youth of Percival is the simplicity of character and manners which was a marked feature of his native town. Fifty years ago Connecticut had no towns larger than what would now be

Connecticut
fifty years
ago.

styled villages. The people were not rich, neither were they poor, or wholly illiterate. Practically democratic, they prided themselves on the peculiar designation which their small State had acquired, as 'the land of steady habits,' and were mostly independent, content, and happy, being to a great extent free from the evils which are engendered by a highly commercial state of society. Percival compared this to the pastoral state, and was highly delighted when, in later years, being employed as a geologist in New Brunswick, he discovered the same style of life and manners in a district which had been settled by a company of Loyalist emigrants from New England.*

In this home and amid these attractive surroundings his earliest years were spent. His father was the physician of the place, and at the time James His father. was born had been established some six years in his profession, and had secured a lucrative practice. Dr. Percival was born in East Haddam, where his ancestors had lived for four generations. The poet traced his descent on the Percival side to James Percival, Descended from a celebrated Puritan and from the English Barons. who about 1706 moved from Barnstable, Massachusetts Colony, to East Haddam, Connecticut.

He married the daughter of the celebrated Leyden pastor, John Robinson; and his grandfather was one of three brothers who came over from England, one of whom settled in New London, one in Plymouth Colony, one in Barnstable.† In England the family may be directly traced to the Barons who lived in the time of William the Conqueror.

His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Hart. Her family had lived in the parish of Kensington — His mother.

* Percival's Poems, Vol. I. p. xviii.

† Appendix A.

a hamlet so called — since the time of its first settlement. She had a sensitive, nervous temperament, and was inclined at times to melancholy ; but her mind was strong and keen and clear ; and she added to her native gifts a better education than women usually had in those days ; she had good literary taste, and in later years heartily appreciated the poetical reputation of her son. Her volumes of his poetry are thoroughly worn from frequent use. His father was her equal. He had a strong constitution and a vigorous mind. He easily grasped a subject, and was noted for keeping his own counsel and doing things entirely in his own way. He was social and persuasive in society, but divided his time mostly between his profession and his home. He was not liberally educated, but he had a taste for letters, and was as well read as most Connecticut doctors in his day. Except in winter, when he could use a sleigh, he made his calls on horseback, turning his saddle-bags into a medicine-chest. He was prompt in business and eminent in his profession. It was said of him by a friend : “ Few physicians in a country town ever performed more business in a given time than Dr. Percival. This may be asserted of him both as it respects his whole professional life and also his daily visits. With a practice of nineteen years, he left an estate that was inventoried at fourteen thousand dollars.” He carried into whatever he undertook that personal enthusiasm and untiring devotion which inspire success. In religion, he was only a member of the church by baptism, falling into that neglect of a distinct confession of faith which Sir Thomas Browne calls “ the general scandal of my profession.” Nor was the mother a communicant during their earlier married life. But the influences of their home were moral, if not distinctly religious. Few

families in those days of Puritan strictness escaped even the outward impression of religious truth.

Dr. Percival in his family was "uniformly kind, affectionate, and indulgent." And a pleasant, happy home it was in the early childhood of James, — the father busy always with an ever-increasing practice, going in and out among his children with cheering words and kind caresses; and the mother teaching them ^{Their family life.} in the intervals of household work their first lessons in duty and knowledge. She was very fond of her children; perhaps not the less so from the fact that all the boys inherited largely her own temperament and endowments. The eldest child was a daughter, now five years old, — "a child dearly beloved by all who knew her"; the next was Edwin; the next, James; the youngest was Oswin. Of these, Oswin alone is still living. They were all so nearly of an age as soon to be company for each other. They were each peculiar as children; but the daughter, who died at the age of seventeen, had less of shyness and reserve than the boys. Of the sons, James was remarkable for his precocious talent and amiable ^{James notices} disposition. From a mere child he was in- ^{natural} ^{scenery when} ^{a mere child.} terested in outward nature, noticing points of interest in natural scenery which do not usually attract children. The occasion of his learning to read and the rapidity of his progress show the bent and powers of his mind at an early age. At a time when he could only spell his words with difficulty, he received a book at the district school which the master used to give to ^{Learns to} some deserving scholar, to be kept till the fol- ^{spell in the} ^{district} ^{school.} lowing Monday. He found, by spelling through its first sentences, that a portion of it related to astronomy. This so excited his interest, that he set diligently to work,

and by dint of hard study was able to read the chapter on the Monday morning with a good degree of fluency. From that time his progress in his studies was rapid. Another anecdote is told by one who grew up with him and attended the same school, the late Horatio Gridley, M. D.: "When I first went to school, I noticed at the foot of his class a little brown-haired boy who had just gone from the head. A difficult word was put out which no one could spell. It came finally to the little boy at the foot, who immediately spelt it and took his place again at the head." "Among his companions," adds the same friend, "he was always cheerful, and whenever meeting them in his solitary walks across the fields, always had a smile and a kind word; but as a school-boy, he never entered into the sports and amusements of his associates, such as sliding, skating, and playing ball, in which boys usually indulge. His grandfather once made each of the three brothers a sled; but while Edwin and Oswin became great coasters, James never used his. I never knew him in all his life manifest any excitement or anger, or have any difficulty with any of the boys. He was remarkably quiet and inoffensive. He used to stay in the school-room at noon, when the other boys were at play, and would sometimes complain if they made too much noise. He seldom went out at recess." Another friend, the late Charles Hooker, M. D., remembers him as "a flaxen-haired boy coming alone to school across the fields, smiling and cheerful." He early betrayed a shy, shrinking habit, never resenting, but rather avoiding the older members of the school, if they did him an injury. He showed, however, a purity of thought and firmness of character unusual in a boy. His father, to overcome this timidity, once put him on horseback and

rode with him into a sham fight. It threw the sensitive lad into convulsions. Nor could he bear to see any creature suffer. He was sent, when older, alone on horseback to visit some relations in Vermont. He had not gone far when the horse's back became sore beneath the saddle. He then dismounted and went on foot; but the soreness still increasing, he finally took off the saddle, and placing it upon his own shoulders, led his horse home. An old lady tells me she distinctly remembers him as he came up the hill, leading his horse and carrying the saddle.

His eagerness to learn soon led him beyond the limits of the district school. When he had learned to read, he devoured eagerly the family collection, which was small; for books were few and costly in those days. He was then allowed to go to the parish library kept in an adjoining house. One day his parents spoke to him about the study of geography; but James had already studied Guthrie's Geography, which he had taken from the library, till he knew more about it than his teacher. When he was only eleven years old, his fame for these studies was such that the neighbors used to come in and ask him difficult questions, to hear his answers. He was already noted for the ease with which he could learn his lessons, his superior intelligence, and an abstracted turn of mind; and with his thoughts continually upon the histories, biographies, voyages, and romances which enriched the parish library, his days at school grew extremely tedious to him. It was this, and not the common infirmity of children, which caused him to creep, "like a snail, unwillingly to school." Buried in these books, he was delighted and happy. He read eagerly and remembered every-^{A great} thing. This was when he was nine and ten^{reader.} years old. I can see him there in the keeping-room of

his father's house, sitting studious over the wars of Alexander or the pages of Josephus, having his highest joy in living in the wonder-land of history and romance. But he did not confine himself to these. He read everything. His brother Oswin tells me that he had the skeleton of a goose which he found on the flat below the house, and that he knew the proper names of all the bones, and had them labelled and numbered. He also showed a passion for geology. Down by the water there were curious stones and diamond-shaped crystals; and these he used to collect and arrange.

His ways at this time were peculiar. He would not eat on earthen plates, thinking that the enamel broken by the use of the knife upon it was poisonous. He was early very simple in his diet, and made no trouble in the family. He seldom engaged in conversation at home; but whenever he met with one whom he thought appreciated him, he would open his stores of learning and thought, and astonish every one by the variety and richness of his conversation.

By the margin of the little stream he used to spend much of his time, usually alone. Here he made maps, upon the sand, of the kingdoms and places which he had read of, using the pebbles to mark the boundaries and positions; and here he marshalled his armies and fought his mimic battles. "At this period he lived," says the Rev. Royal Robbins, the late pastor of Kensington Parish, and in younger years the poet's intimate friend, "in a world of his own, — an ideal world. He knew and he cared very little respecting the real world of mankind. His cast of mind was highly imaginative; and, aided by his extensive recollections of history, geography, and other reading, he lived and acted

very much according to the fancies which his knowledge enabled him to contrive. Some details of this sort, casually given by the poet in conversation, would surprise one as relating to a boy of his age, and instruct the student of human nature in regard to the incipient workings of a creative and poetic mind. Enveloping himself under circumstances of Egyptian, Grecian, or Roman history, or perhaps the chivalry of the Middle Ages, or as it might happen, indulging some merely arbitrary creations of his fancy, and seated by a stream, or wandering in the woods, he delighted to call up around him those representations that corresponded with the realities of which he had read, or with the archetype of them existing in his own mind. He could feign to himself, in perfect keeping, and in their true costume, the figures and scenes of those ages past,—could imagine himself to be conversant with them, with such depth of interest as scarcely suffered him to realize actual life and its wants. And in his poem on the Pleasures of Childhood he has described in verses of great beauty these wanderings of his fancy :—

“ Along the stream,	Described by himself.
That flowed in summer's mildness o'er its bed	
Of rounded pebbles, with its scanty wave	
Encircling many an islet, and its banks	
In bays and havens scooping, I would stray,	
And, dreaming, rear an empire on its shores.	
There cities rose, and palaces and towers	
Caught the first light of morning; there the fleet	
Lent all its snowy canvas to the wind,	
And bore with awful front against the foe;	
There armies marshalled their array, and joined	
In mimic slaughter; there the conquered fled;—	
I followed their retreat, until secure	
They found a refuge in their country's walls;	
The triumphs of the conqueror were mine,	
The bounds of empire widened, and the wealth	

Torn from the helpless hands of humbled foes.
 There many a childish hour was spent; the world,
 That moved and fretted round me, had no power
 To draw me from my musings, but the dream
 Enthrall'd me till it seemed reality;
 And when I woke, I wondered that a brook
 Was babbling by, and a few rods of soil,
 Covered with scant herbs, the arena where
 Cities and empires, fleets and armies, rose."

This kind of exercise betrays at once his power and his weakness. In the same poem he alludes feelingly to the harm these imaginings did him : —

"The brighter part
 Shone out, and caught the wonder of the great
 In tender childhood, while the weaker half
 Had all the feebleness of infancy.
 A thousand wildering reveries led astray
 My better reason, and my unguarded soul
 Danced like a feather on the turbid sea
 Of its own wild and freakish fantasies."

All these amusements, the joyous occupation of his
 childhood, were suddenly broken in upon and
 ended in January, 1807, by the death of his
 father in the prime of life. It was a time when the
 typhus fever was prevailing to a considerable extent
 in the neighborhood. "Dr. Percival returned from
 Southington," says his friend, Dr. Horatio Gridley, "on
 Sunday evening, complaining of being unwell. On Mon-
 day he visited some very sick patients in Southington and
 Worthington; Tuesday he took a drive in his sleigh and
 visited more patients; Wednesday, also, contrary to the
 remonstrances of his wife, he visited a very distressed
 family in Worthington, and while here fell asleep sit-
 ting by the fire, and manifested some aberration of mind.
 He returned home and took an emetic in the afternoon.

The next morning he sat at table, and took some tea in his mouth, which he spirted out, and shed tears. He arose and examined his tongue by the glass. Disease shortly confined him to his house, and derangement became permanent during the latter part of his disease. He died January 21, 1807, at the age of forty. His daughter died of the same disease nineteen days after her father. She had a protracted illness of fifty-two days. Edwin was taken sick the night his father died; James was taken the night after his father was buried; and his wife, a week before her daughter died. These all recovered after a long confinement. It will be seen that the mother and three of her four children were sick at the same time. Dr. Percival came down to the grave in the fulness of life and in the midst of his usefulness. His loss was deeply and extensively felt. His burial was with Masonic ceremonies."

His death did not break up the family, though the change fell heavily upon his wife. A maiden sister came to live with her, and she undertook herself the education of her boys until they could go away to school. A little later, James, then in his twelfth year, went to school two quarters to the Rev. Benoni Upson, D. D., the village pastor. Then James and Edwin were both placed under the care of their maternal uncle, ^{James at school in} the late Rev. Seth Hart, rector of St. George's, Hempstead. Hempstead, Long Island. He kept a private boarding-school, afterwards enlarged to an academy, for preparing boys for college. Here James began the study of Latin, and here his insatiable thirst for reading was renewed on a larger scale. He used to send by the stage-driver to New York, a distance of twenty-three miles, to ^{His read-} obtain books from a circulating library. Here ^{ing.}

he got Mavor's Voyages and Travels, and read all of them; and there lies before me an alphabetical catalogue, in his own cramped, boyish handwriting, of the coveted histories, biographies, and travels which belonged to this library. In this same little blank-book I find his classification of quadrupeds, with references to books where more could be learned about them; and on the last pages there are the names of the books he had obtained by the stage-driver and eagerly devoured. They number in all one hundred and seven volumes, including Goldsmith's Natural History, Smith's Wealth of Nations, the French Revolution, Kennet's Roman Antiquities, the Biographical Dictionary, the Dictionary of Arts and Sciences in ten volumes, Ross's Botany, the Laws of Nations, and the twenty-five volumes of Mavor's Universal History.

At the close of the year he was taken from Hempstead, and placed in the family and under the tuition of the Rev. Israel Beard Woodward, of Wolcott,

At school in Wolcott. a town adjacent to Kensington. His school-fellow here, during the winter, was the late Rev. Edward Robinson, D. D.; and a friendship then sprang up between them which lasted through life. Dr. Robinson once told me that he probably wrote his first poem at this time. It was upon an unfortunate girl who had had trouble with a village carpenter, and became the butt of village scandal. It has perished; but though mere doggerel, he said it was very amusing. He was here a good scholar, but much alone. He never used to join in holiday rambles with his schoolmates; but if they

Likes to be alone. happened to stray among the wild and solitary regions near by, they would usually find him communing with himself in the wildest place, at the foot of a cliff, or upon the bank of a secluded stream. And this tendency to

solitary walks, to commune with nature and not with men, was only the further development of his earliest childish tastes. He found the same delight on Long Island in watching the ever-changing features of the ocean. The impressions made upon his imagination in these rambles were so vivid and distinct, that, years after, he wrote them off as if by inspiration; and this is the secret of the peculiar freshness and minuteness and beauty of his descriptive poetry.

At this time began those mental troubles from which he was never entirely free. He himself accurately describes this peculiar condition where he ^{His mental troubles.} says he held

“ A middle place between the strong
And vigorous intellect a Newton had
And the wild ravings of insanity.”

There is reason to believe that his uncle, to whose school he returned at the expiration of the year, did not quite fathom James's pure and innocent disposition. He was a hearty, vigorous man, fond of good living. His pupil was a boy so shy, so thoughtful, so physically endowed, that he needed most careful and delicate ^{Does not like his teacher.} treatment. Because he ate more sparingly than the other boys, he urged in his hearty way more food upon him, and this wounded his feelings. One day at a training he offered James a glass of spirit, which was in perfect accordance with the custom in those days; but Percival's sense of perfect virtue for the whole of his past life was unpardonably wounded. He found his chief enjoyment not in his studies nor in the society of his companions, who were inclined to run upon him, but in the histories, voyages, and travels which had before delighted him. In allusion to the teachings of his uncle,

in a poem written when his mind was morbid and diseased, and when he saw the failures of his teacher in their worst light, he has the following trenchant lines. I give them simply to illustrate the poet's feelings. They are from his passionately tragic poem, *The Suicide* : —

An anathema. “Ye who abused, neglected, rent, and stained
That heart, when pure and tender, come and dwell
On these dark ruins, and, by Heaven arraigned,
Feel, as you look, the scorpion stings of hell.

“But no! your cold, black bosoms cannot feel;
Amid the rank weeds, flowers can never blow;
Your hearts, encrusted in their case of steel,
No feelings of remorse or pity know.

“Yes, you will say, poor, weak, and childish boy
Infirm of purpose, shook by every sigh,
A thing of air, a light, fantastic toy, —
What reck we if such shadows live or die?

“But no! my lip's blood calls aloud to Heaven,
The arm of Justice cannot, will not sleep;
A perfect retribution shall be given,
And Vengeance on your heads her coals shall heap.

“Where minds like this are ruined, guilt must be,
And where guilt is, remorse will gnaw the soul,
And every moment teem with agony,
And sleepless thoughts in burning torrents roll.

“And thou, arch moral-murderer! hear my curse:
Go, gorge and wallow in thy priestly sty;
Than what thou art, I cannot wish thee worse, —
There with thy kindred reptiles crawl and die.”



CHAPTER II.

1809, 1810.

YOUTHFUL POETRY. — THE COMMERCIAID. — MANUSCRIPT BOOKS OF
EARLY POEMS.

DURING his second stay at Hempstead he began his poetical labors in earnest. To this time I refer the composition of an elaborate mock-heroic poem, *The Commerciad*,^{The Commerciad.} which extends to two thousand two hundred and sixty-eight lines. It was written in his fourteenth year. It has a preface of one hundred and ninety-seven lines, in which he invokes the Muse with various pleadings. It begins thus : * —

“ O Poetry Sweet Muse I now have sung
Some wild Untutor'd Strains but not among
The Polish'd poets of th' Augustan Age
Blind Milton's Fire or Homer's Furious Rage
Old Ossians magic song ye pallid Ghost
Great Fingals martial & most warlike host.
Nor yet ye Sweetness of Thompsonian Strains
His yellow cornfields & his verdant plains
Nor let me ever be ta'en by such hope
As to o'erpass ye lines of Easy pope
The Wild Confused Strains of Drydens mind
Or Grays Sweet Elegy by taste refin'd

* These extracts are given in exactly their shape in the manuscript. It is written throughout in a large school-boy hand, without punctuation or division. It shows that the poem was never revised, and that he wrote down his fancies as they came hot from his mind.

Hard should I Work & I should labor hard
 To equal with my pen his barb'rous bard
 But let some genius mark my boyish song
 And lift me 'bove ye common scribbling throng.
 Ne'er let me poor descend to Jackey horner
 Or seek my bread by songs in poets corner
 But let me always have my liberty
 Nor like Huge Johnson e'er *impransus* be."

Comparing, in the same preface, the pleasures of vice with the delights of poetry, he speaks of idle lords,

" Who tattle with the Ladies or at play
 Kill father time & waste the tedious day
 Tedious to them but to the Studious boy
 Each coming day affords him real Joy
 He e'en can pleased pass ye Day alone
 And When its pass'd regrets yt it is done,"

and gives us insight into his own boyish life.

The *Commerciad* begins in the following strain:—

" Bland Commerce Noble Theme in Yankey Days
 Thy frequent praises rouse the poets lays
 Oh Spotless Maid you are at last entrap'd
 In a Foul Deed oh! that it Never hap'd
 Happy New England would have been if we
 Had kept the Freedom of the Land & Sea
 But no Democracy that Basest Fiend
 A Foe To order t' anarchy a Friend
 Has set the people by their Heads and Ears
 Till they have left it roused by their Fears
 That the best Hopes of Fair Columbia
 Should be subverted in Embargo's Day."

The poet then goes on to picture in glowing colors the advantage of commerce, ascribing to it, with youthful ingenuity, all the various growth and prosperity of the nation. His descriptions have a special point, because the whole country was then suffering from the Embargo. The discussions in regard to this act prob-

Remarks
 upon it.

ably led him to select Commerce as the theme of his youthful epic, as they also led Mr. Bryant to ^{Takes the same subject} the same choice in his first poem of length. It ^{as Bryant.}

is curious that both these poets in their earliest writings, while subjects had not been suggested by the deeper intuitions of their own mental life, should have written upon nearly the same topics. Both wrote feelingly and largely, of the times; and both wrote truthfully of New England scenery. The range of Percival's knowledge at this early step in his career is remarkable. The course of his poem leads him, after speaking of the enlivening effects of commerce in general, to dwell minutely upon the historical developments of the several States.

In recounting the heroes of Connecticut, he makes the following reference to its politics and literature:—

“ There Hillhouse born our countrys rights to guard To keep our People from the Statutes hard Of Cursed Jefferson Son of the Devil Whose thoughts are wicked and whose mind is evil There Dwight a learned Man & poet too Who Natures Works & Arts Improvements knew Who wrote in numbers studied & terse And Chanaan grew Illustrious In his Verse And Trumbul Son of genius & of worth Who from his Storehouse call'd his Treasure forth In sweet Simplicity Nature he hit And his McFingal is Extoll'd for wit There Barlow shines the Homer of our age Genius and Elegance adorn his page.”	A tribute to Connecticut worthies.
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He explains the proverbially steady habits of Connecticut people thus:—

“ When Justice and Content Europe did leave
 For other countries they their Wings did Give
 T' escape the Attacks of Hell & the old Leaven
 They chose Connecticut instead of Heaven.”

When he comes to Maryland, he gives a severe rebuke to the slaveholder, denouncing slavery with the honest indignation of one far in advance of his age. He takes up the subject with even more vigor in the Seasons of New England, from which I quote : —

A rebuke to slavery.

“ Swains of New England you I call to stop
That horrid trade which grows in human blood
And from the oppressor's iron grasp to wrench
The crimson scourge dropping with negroe's gore.
Bid o'er your swelling hills the maples rise
And spread their pleasing verdure to the sight
Let not the axe resound thro'out their groves
But leave the trunks to all consuming time
Then shall the tyrant see his prospects fail
And our dear land his blood stain'd produce vie
Then will the slave from toil & hardship free
Beneath the spreading Bohab loudly sing
Thanks to New England's sons.”

Here is a passage, very musical and sweet. He speaks of places : —

“ Where the lone Whipporwills their lays prolong
Mixing Sweet Melody in their soft song,
She thro' the night her mournful Ditty sings.
While Now I write with thrilling sense it rings
Thro' my charm'd Ear Delighting all my soul
Revolving Strains Melifluously roll
Perch'd on a shrub the Joyed Air they fill
And the Still Darkness echoes whip-poor-will.”

Such are a few extracts from this long epic poem in which the genius of Percival first shone out. It has but one canto, and proceeds in one undivided strain to the end. It is formed upon the plan of the *Æneid*, with a touch here and there which indicates his earliest poetic readings. It is said that, until about this time, he never read poetry ; but when once its treasures

Begins to read poetry.

were opened to him, he read with great eagerness. His earliest poets were Thomson and Bloomfield. At the close of *The Commercial* he addresses the critics with mingled fear and scorn. This was his own opinion of the poem:—

A poet criticising himself.

“ Know then ye Critics that I am a Boy
In Manners meek & in My Actions coy
Who labour this Just to exalt my credit
Both in My purse & fame I Now have said it
Snarl on ye Critics Bark & Snap & Growl
With all the Graveness of Minerva’s owl
Say that it’s wrote in barb’b’rous hobbling lines
And not a Spark of wit thro’ that Veil shines
Certain a Rude & Rural poem ’t is
And Roughen’d hideous with the Rustic phiz
’T is a hard Subject you must surely own
I Never should Attempt it if I’d known
The Dryness of it.

A Boy of Fifteen years to toil & Work
His tedious way & grope & feel in Dark
An Orphan too ’t will calm your Doggish rage
To spare my first attempted blundering page.”

Concerning the time it took him to compose it he says, —

“ Forward I must Haste
To end this first Canto, six short Weeks are
To Write this poem surely very spare.”

The poem, as a whole, is only remarkable as a youthful production. The couplets are far from perfect in rhythm and flow; but they are crowded with the fruits of his early readings, and already we find traces of that soft, gentle touch which beautifully marks the poetry of his ripper years.

In the same manuscript volume are several short poems which indicate his range of thought while at Hempstead. The first of these is named “Ef-
Shorter poems.

fusions," intended for the Gothamites, a satire upon money-getting, and fashions, and modern ways. That he was not yet inspired with a love of the classics is evident from the following lines : —

" 'T is Strange to me that men should seek
To Learn old Latin, Hebrew, Greek
Chaldee & Fifty other speeches
Which Never lawyer or priest preaches."

Again he shows his deep disgust with the ancient tongues : —

" For what I care I'll not do so
Nor think there 's fame in $\acute{o} \eta \tau \acute{o}$
No I will Ne'er be always squatting
Nor Fumbling over greek & Latin
On Horse Pegasus I will prance
In Fields of Fiction & Romance."

There follow a "Description of a Great Deist, Thomas Paine," an ode "To a Child of One Year Old," and to "American Poets," a "Song written on the Fourth of July," an "Ode to Kensington my Native Place," and a second "Ode to my Native Place," "A Fragment," describing the hills of Kensington, "A Satire on some Boys at the School where I wrote these Poems who transformed themselves into Horses and Auctioneers," a "Hymn to the Creator," and the "Book First" of "Homer Burlesqued." They are mostly rough first attempts, here a line of beauty and there mere doggerel, showing that the boy had not yet learned to distinguish between elevated and common thoughts, aiming a good deal at satire and sometimes witty. The Catalogue of earliest poems. The character. An Ode to Kensington. "Ode to Kensington" gives a vivid picture of his early tastes, his school-boy trials, and the beginning of his later mental troubles.

" The pleasant vales
 The fruitful Dales
 Of native Kensington
 Thy Hills I Hail
 Death do not veil
 Them from me pale and Wan
 'T was once I knew
 Contentment true
 Nor ever pride I Had
 But Now I sigh
 I seek the Sky
 With Greatness I run mad
 I once was meek
 My book to seek
 Employ'd the Summers day
 If Drowning rain
 E'er Drench'd the plain
 I Help'd to save the Hay
 The Bleating sheep
 I Joy'd to keep
 To see them eat the corn
 With Rosy face
 And Mind of Grace
 I Early rose I' the Morn
 But Now I'm pale
 My Morals fail
 My Health to sickness grows
 My Shrugish Blood
 Scarce flows its flood
 I fear the Slightest Wind
 I once was fond
 T' improve my mind
 By reading useful Books
 And when I knew
 My Task I Flew
 To see my Fathers smiling looks.
 But Now I Hate
 I feel so great
 My Masters to obey
 Democracy
 And Liberty
 Forever I do say

I once Knew not
 The drunken sot
 The proud I Did not know
 I Knew not then
 The Leering ken
 Nought but Affections glow
 No more I Hear
 Of Friends so Dear
 I Know the Drunkard Vile
 I Know the Great
 Who scorn my state
 Nor feel Affections smile
 Detested now
 I Am cast low
 The Scorn of richer boys
 No more I see
 Those who love me
 I Know no real Joys
 But May retreat
 My Sorrows greet
 And Wipe away the Tear
 Which now does flow
 While I 'm so low
 And Give me Friends so dear
 No more regret
 My soul shall Whet
 To equal Nobles Great
 My heart so meek
 Retreat shall seek
 And Think no more of State."

The difficulty of assimilating himself to the ways of
 other boys at the district school reappears in his
 At Hemp-
 stead. life at Hempstead, where, while indulging so
 freely his desire for reading and his poetic ambition, he
 became the sport of the wealthier boys from New York.
 Here, too, he was by himself; he dwelt apart.



CHAPTER III.

1810-1815.

REVIEWS HIS STUDIES. — ENTERS YALE COLLEGE. — DR. WHEATON.
— OFFERS A MANUSCRIPT VOLUME OF POEMS TO GENERAL HOWE.
— DISAPPOINTED AND LEAVES COLLEGE. — THE SEASONS OF NEW
ENGLAND. — BECOMES A FARMER IN BERLIN. — GOES BACK AND
ENTERS THE NEXT CLASS. — HIS NOTE-BOOKS. — LETTER FROM
DR. SPRAGUE. — HIS TRAGEDY AT COMMENCEMENT. — DR.
DWIGHT'S ADVICE.



JAMES now returned home to Kensington, having taken the usual three years in preparing for college. The spring and summer were spent with the Rev. Joab Brace, D. D., of Newington, Connecticut, where he reviewed ^{Reviews his} his classical studies. Dr. Brace describes him, ^{studies.} at the age of sixteen, in his family, as "a fair and pleasant youth, delicate in his complexion, rather shy and retiring, soft and lisping in conversation, neat and beautiful in his dress, gentle in his manners, lovely in his whole deportment." His peculiar disposition won the affections of those who had the care of him; while his mental troubles, his unbounded passion for general knowledge, his sensitiveness to praise, his ignorance of the world, his consciousness of rare gifts now developing itself, increased their sympathy. The same instructor further remarks: "He was delicate in his feelings, sensitive to any impropriety, quick to discern and very ready ^{Not well pre-} to feel every kindness. He was not so well fitted ^{pared for} college.

for college as some of his companions; but the defect was owing to his youth and to his not having been thoroughly introduced into the specific and minute things of the Latin grammar; but his industry, keenness, and retentiveness soon made the ground all clear. He was a youth of great inquisitiveness and observation." It was also Percival's own opinion in after years, that the course of his preparatory studies was not very judiciously prescribed.

In the early autumn of 1810 he entered himself at Entered Yale College. Yale College, New Haven, as a member of the Freshman Class. This institution was then in the high tide of prosperity under the management of President Dwight, who now, in the maturity of his powers and the height of his reputation, had succeeded in inspiring both the faculty and the students with his own glowing earnestness and high ambition. The other officers of the college were the venerable Jeremiah Day, the next President of the Institution after Dr. Dwight, the late Benjamin Silliman, the father of American science, Yale College. and James L. Kingsley, so long known as the Latin Professor. They were assisted by six tutors, among whom were Josiah W. Gibbs and Chauncey A. Goodrich, both afterwards Professors, and men to whose labors the College has been largely indebted. The number of students then averaged seventy to each class. In the studies, the ancient languages had the preference, and the modern physical sciences had almost no foothold. In the Senior Year the time was largely consumed by divinity and rhetorical studies; and a special feature under Dr. Dwight was the general class debates, in which, acting as umpire, he drew out the talents of young men, and instructed them in the practical art of reasoning.

The following letter from the late Rev. Dr. Wheaton, formerly President of Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, gives a pleasant picture of his earlier college life.

TO THE EDITOR.

MARBLEDALE, (NEW PRESTON,) June 25, 1860.

DEAR SIR : —

During the greater part of Freshman year, 1810–11, Percival occupied the same room with myself ^{College} and my friend Averill, long since gone to his ^{life.} rest. The peculiar traits of character which distinguished him later in life were strongly developed at that time, but not in the same degree.

His manner of life while with us was something like what I am about to relate. On leaving the breakfast-hall, he would go out on a long, solitary walk in the suburbs, returning about an hour before the eleven o'clock recitation, when he would steal silently into the chamber, unlock his desk, and write a few minutes, making a record as we supposed of the poetic inspirations which had visited him in his rambles. This done, he would return his paper to the desk, lock it, and take up the text-book of the subject of the next recitation. This he would look at for half an hour, silent and motionless, when he was fully prepared, whatever the subject might be. After tea, the solitary walk would be repeated, and sometimes prolonged till late in the evening.

During all the time we were inmates he rarely took part in conversation, his mind seeming to be always pre-occupied, and dwelling apart in a world of its own. Yet he was uniformly amiable and sometimes even cheerful; and would occasionally, when encouraged, read to us a few lines of what he had written. Neither I nor my

friend, however, suspected to what an extent the poetic passion had possessed him; till, in the summer of our Freshman year, it was rumored in college that he had offered a manuscript volume of poems to General Howe for publication; which was declined, with something meant for good advice. This brought upon him the raillery of the college boys, which deeply wounded his sensitive nature; and to a question from one of us as to the truth of the report, and some remark, perhaps, not complimentary to his discretion, he burst into a passionate flood of tears, and sobbed out, "I don't care, I *will* be a poet." After that we were careful how we touched the tender spot. His mortification was extreme, as much probably at the publicity of this youthful escapade as at his failure to appear as an author. It must be remembered that he was at this time very young, — not more, I should think, than sixteen. During the short remainder of the term he seemed to shun more than ever all intercourse with the students; and at the end of the term withdrew from the college, returning on the following year, and entering the next class. It would be difficult, I apprehend, to prove that, during his whole collegiate course, though perfectly inoffensive, and disliked by none, he ever unbosomed himself even in the slightest degree to any one of his companions. The inner history of his mind *at this period* will never be written.

Very respectfully yours,
N. S. WHEATON.

The manuscript volume here referred to was The Seasons of New England, with other miscellaneous poems. It was first shown to Noah Webster, the lexicographer, with the request that he

Offers poetry
to Dr. Webster,
which
is rejected.

would sanction its publication. The incident took place in General Howe's bookstore, situated where the New Haven Hotel now stands; but Dr. Webster advised him to wait, and not be in a hurry to publish it. He afterwards handed it to General Howe. It was considered, in those days, such an act of presumption for a shy Freshman to think of publishing a volume of poetry, that the General gave the volume back to Percival unexamined, with a rebuke for his audacity. The refusal, without even considering the merits of the poetry at all, deeply wounded him. As Dr. Wheaton has shown, and as will appear from the testimony of others, the poetic passion had now taken deep hold of him; and for Percival to fail or be bluntly refused was a terrible blow to his ambition. Dr. Gridley adds, "By some few of his college acquaintances he was always addressed in rather an unfeeling, Persecution taunting manner by the appellation of Poet"; following it. and he himself once said, "I obtained the respect of the Freshman Class by writing satirical verses against some of my classmates who had commenced persecuting me." "His failure in publishing verses and the persecution following it," Dr. Gridley says, "was, in reality, the true cause of his leaving college for a year"; but he Leaves col- did not go away till the spring of his second lege. year's residence.

This poetry which he offered to General Howe for publication, *The Seasons of New England*, was The Seasons of New Eng- probably written at college during his Fresh- land. man year, and embodies his intercourse with nature in the beautiful suburbs of New Haven and his own native Kensington. It was plainly suggested by Thomson's *Seasons* and Bloomfield's *Farmer's Boy*, is written in the same measure, and follows the same plan. He did not

complete it; only Winter and a portion of Spring were finished. It would appear that he put it by in grief when his volume was rejected. The reader will notice in a few extracts from it given below an increased power of discriminating the true from the false in poetry, and much sweetness and softness in the flow of the lines. He describes the approach of winter:—

“ Now the tall trees that once were covered o’er
With pleasing green their naked branches wave
(When rage the furious winds) & mutely mourn
Their Summer robes which yield unto the pow’r
Of Winter and in Autumn’s fading hour
Strow the pale sick’ning fields, the barren wastes
And rivers slowly gliding thro’ the meads
Or roaring ’mong the crags that stop their course
Until the congregated waters join
Their boist’rous forces & wildly rage & foam
And burst away & thunder to the plain.”

He alludes to the silence of the season:—

“ The murmuring rivulet, the furious stream,
And thundering cataract are silent all;
Or else the trav’ler hears a hidden sound
That rumbles underneath the icy robe
Which clothes the placid lake & roaring brook.”

The following picture of New England life fifty years

Poetical picture of the olden time. ago is still true in many parts of Connecticut:—

“ The careful swain who knows the coming storm
And sees dire Winter thron’d on rolling clouds
And blowing desolation from his mouth,
Secures the tender sheep in the close pen
And plentifully deals the rowing hay.
Nor does he disregard the lowing ox,
And patient cow, who feed upon the stalks
Of Indian corn, or else the well-cur’d grass
Which in the blooming Spring bedeck’d the mead
Sprinkled with yellow dandelion’s flow’rs.

The Horse neighs loudly for his provender,
The Swine squeal for their wonted food, the fowls
Crowd 'round the kitchen door & cackling eat
The scattered crumbs. Meanwhile, the cheerful swain
Whistles, as he performs his varied task
And feels more real joy than monarchs know.
When he has stor'd his wood & milk'd his cows
He fills his kettle, stirs the enlivening flame
And ready gets his frugal homely meal.
First shakes he in the flour, & agitates
The mixture with his pudding stick, until
The bubbles indicate that it is done;
Then on the plate he pours the steaming food,
Prepares the luscious milk which satisfies
His healthy appetite, nor does he feel,
While he partakes this dish with his fond wife
And hearty children, half those fears which sour
The splendid courtier's life. His supper past,
He solemn says, 'Thanks to Almighty God
And to his suffering Son for this repast';
Then laughs away the night in guiltless mirth:
Or else he tells those feats which he perform'd
Against the base marauding British bands,
Until he sees the blush glow on the cheek,
The hand rise high, as if to strike the foe,
And honest manly pride swell the young mind."

He marks the absence of the birds : —

"The fields are mute, no more the robin sings
No more the bluebird cuts the yielding air
No more the airy swallow rapid wheels
No more the whippoorwill beneath the hedge
Tunes her sweet throat & vocal makes the eve."

And again the absence of stirring life : —

"No more the reapers' cheery song is heard
No more the plough-boy whistles o'er the lea
No more the varied sounds of Industry
Fall on the ear, the cider presses creak
The rattling mill, the frequent thumping flails
And the sharp tinkling of the mower's scythe."

The gathering of neighbors on a winter evening is here pleasantly touched on : —

“ Now frequent from the lowly cot the laugh
 Shouts loud where gather round the blazing fire
 The friendly neighbors. Then the tale of war
 Is told by some old hoary headed man,
 When often sparkles strong his beaming eye
 And oft his arm with violence thumps his crutch.
 Then some young maiden innocently coy
 Tunes her sweet voice & sings her strains of love,
 The grandam tells unto the wond’ring child
 Stories of ghosts & fairies till he starts
 At his own shade & fears to look behind.
 Again the jest is echo’d round the room
 And shouts the laugh unfeign’d; the cider then
 Foams in the well scour’d tankard; apples sweet
 And streaked with ruddy tints delight the taste
 And joy and friendship brighten ev’ry eye.”

These passages give but an inadequate idea of the poem. It is a great advance upon the Com-
 merciad in the smoothness of the verse and the sustained vigor of the pictures; but there is the same minute information, the same delicacy of touch (for one so young), the same accurate and poetical picturing of nature. In this poem nothing that belongs to a New England winter in the country has escaped him; and there are frequent touches which show a devout recognition of God in the changes and beauty of the seasons. Yet with all its merits it falls many degrees below his subsequent works, having its chief value, even here, as a step in the unfolding of his poetical genius. It is curious to observe thus early the length of his sentences, winding in and out with many convolutions ere they end, yet never ungrammatical, — like the prose sentences of Rufus Choate, and showing a mastery of language in many respects as wonderful as his.

Characteris-
 tics of the
 poem.

Coming home to Kensington in the spring of 1812, he gave up his studies, and, procuring for himself a suit of coarse clothes and cowhide shoes, determined to become a farmer. His mother had ^{Becomes a farmer.} now been married to Mr. Samuel Porter, who was a farmer in the town of Berlin, but not in Kensington Parish, and he went to live with her and assist in the labor of the farm. But here he was uneasy; and although always willing to work, he was often moody and dejected, and would sometimes go away into the woods or to a neighboring town for several days, without the knowledge of his friends. His peculiarly excitable temperament led him to strange freaks and sudden unexpected movements. He would throw down his rake, for instance, on a summer afternoon, and running with frantic leaps to the house, would shut himself up for hours; but many of his wanderings were no doubt due to his desire to explore strange localities as a student of nature. In the winter he attempted to teach school in Wolcott, a neighboring town; but he soon became disgusted, and threw up his employment; and his desire to resume his studies growing strong, he soon after rode down to New Haven on a load of apples which his brother ^{Returns to college.} was taking to market, and entered the class next to the one he had left.

In this his reputation had preceded him, and he was better appreciated. It was in this year he had ^{Has the measles.} the measles. Dr. Ives came and left him some pills. Percival made a great ado about them. He could not swallow a pill; but his classmate, and roommate during Junior and Senior years,* deceived him, and gave him a bread pill. It made Percival angry.

* Julius S. Barnes, M. D.

He used now often to send in his poetry to be read at the meetings of the debating-society known as the Brothers in Unity, of which he was a member, and one poem caused considerable excitement at the time. It was the outline of what was afterwards published as the First Part of Prometheus; and the late Edward Everett said of it, when it was formally published a few years later: "Not a few of these verses have all the dark sententiousness of Byron, clothed in an uncommonly easy versification." He used also to post up his poetry anonymously about the college, and listen eagerly to hear what was said of it.

He was eminent for his mathematical abilities. On the college holidays, Wednesday and Saturday after-
Appears as a poet. A good mathematical scholar. noons, he used to study Hutton's Mathematics as a recreation; and "on a certain occasion he solved, at the last moment, while the bell was ringing for recitation, the celebrated Catholic proposition in Spherics, in Webber's Mathematics, a feat which none of his classmates succeeded in performing."*

In the last two years of his college life he roomed in the fourth story and northwest corner of what is now called Old South-Middle College. The rooms were then, as now, largely inhabited by rats and mice that had fashioned doors of entrance in every corner, and one of these they killed; but Percival was so overcome by the thought of taking the life of a living creature, that he mourned its loss as if it had been a human being. He was morbidly sensitive to pain; and he used to say that he felt as if he were made of glass, and should tumble in pieces if any one touched him.

Dr. Barnes adds his testimony to the Rev. Dr. Wheaton's

* Percival's Poems, Vol. I. p. xix.

as to Percival's high rank in his class: "He wrote poetry during some of his leisure hours on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons for amusement, and occasional pieces when requested by his friends; but never allowed his poetical effusions to interfere with his regular studies ^{His position in his class.} and college duties. He made himself a complete master of all his lessons, and so far as scholarship was concerned, ranked as high as any in the class. He made no effort at display, and very unfortunately had an impediment in his speech, (it might be termed *sibilant*,) which caused him to appear at a disadvantage in his recitations and in all his public exercises. I do not recollect that on any occasion his powers were called into exercise to show his superiority before the President. His acquaintance with him was only that of students in general; and I am not certain that he knew anything of his poetical talents while he was in college. In his compositions and disputations before the class he was always respectable,* though, I think, on the subjects which were given him to discuss, he did not think or express himself so strongly as to make any very lasting impression. His superiority as a scholar was acknowledged; but his extreme sensitiveness kept him from forming many acquaintances, though he was in fact of an eminently social disposition."

In these two latter years of his course, his note-books show that he was a careful listener to lectures, ^{His college note-books.} and that he brought away all he heard. One book is devoted to eighty-four Lectures on Chemistry by Professor Silliman, mainly abstracts, but often surprisingly full. It is curious to go over them now, and see how the

* It is said that he read them in so low a tone as often to call out the remark from Dr. Dwight, "Read up louder, Percival. You have nothing to be ashamed of."

late Nestor of American Science treated such topics over fifty years ago. They are probably the only full sketch of those Lectures now in existence. Another has a careful account of the Lectures on Natural Philosophy given by Professor Day; and on the last fly-leaf is a long list of Scotch music in the same early handwriting. Another is devoted to exercises in writing Latin. Another contains some Lectures on History, and also on Language, by Professor Kingsley. The commonplace books of his Senior year, under Dr. Dwight, are still more carefully written out, and embrace a wide variety of subjects. There is, first, "A System of Rhetoric compiled from Blair's Lectures and Dr. Dwight's Remarks," in which the suggestions of the living teacher may easily be detected; in the same connection also are some notes on Logic. There are notes of Lectures on Moral Philosophy. There is one book devoted mainly to the famous Disputes and Decisions by Dr. Dwight, in which the arguments *pro* and *con* of his classmates are noted down, followed by the decisions of the President. The topics are the same as those contained in the volume of Disputes published by his nephew some years later. It contains also some notes on the chief modern English poets, evidently Dr. Dwight's criticisms; and over one hundred and sixty "Scotch Airs and Words adapted to them." There is another book devoted partly to a "System of Theology from Vincent and Dr. Dwight," and partly to a very full abstract of Linné's *Systema Naturæ*, and filled up in the centre with later bibliographical notes of the titles and names of all the works ever published relating to the different languages of the world. There is a still larger quarto manuscript volume of three hundred pages, which is written full, in his

cramped, close chirography, with further notes of his college lectures and studies. It contains very careful notes of "Mr. Silliman's Private Lectures on Mineralogy," of "Mr. Kingsley's Lectures on History," of a Treatise on Husbandry; a full Treatise on Botany, with extensive notes of Dr. Ives's Lectures; "A View of the Natural Orders of Linnæus from the Encyclopædia Britannica"; "Additional Genera from Shaw's General Zoölogy"; the "Natural Families of Vegetables"; a Continuation of Professor Silliman's Lectures on Chemistry; and very complete notes of "A System of Chemistry by John Murray, Vol. II." There is another book devoted entirely to "An Epitome of Wilson's Ornithology"; and another is partially filled with a work on "Zoölogy compiled from Shaw, Buffon, and Pennant." These extensive studies of an undergraduate confirm the remark of one of his classmates: Extensive studies.

"I never knew one who could acquire correct knowledge quicker than Percival." Here he laid largely and liberally the foundation of that accurate and wide learning in which he was unrivalled. Save in the department of metaphysical studies, no subject on which he could gain information escaped him.

The following extract from a letter written by the Rev. William B. Sprague, D. D., to the Editor of Letter from the Rev. Dr. Sprague. Percival's Poems, Mr. James T. Fields, completes what may be now gathered concerning his college life: "He was not in my division, so that I was not accustomed to hear him recite until his Senior year (when we both came under the instruction of Dr. Dwight), but he always had the reputation of being a good scholar. He was of about the middle size, of light complexion, of an agreeable face, that did not easily change its ex-

pression, and as shy as the most modest little girl you ever saw. He seemed to be essentially of a solitary turn. You would rarely see him walking with anybody; and when he walked at all, it was usually in some retired place. I think he had few acquaintances in college, though I never knew that he had any enemies; and the fact that his intercourse was so circumscribed was doubtless to be attributed to constitutional reserve, and not to the consciousness of his own superiority. Everybody looked upon him as a good-natured, sensitive, thoughtful, odd, gifted fellow. He wrote a good deal of poetry in college, and some of it, I think, he gave me; but nobody then, I believe, dreamed of the eminence to which he was destined. He was a great reader, and I used to be surprised at the extent of his information on a great variety of subjects. I remember once having occasion to prepare a college exercise on the subject of the Crusades; and happening to mention to Percival that I needed to increase my knowledge of the subject a good deal before writing upon it, he at once put into my hands an elaborate essay on the Crusades, which showed a familiarity with the history of that whole period that amazed me."

In the class appointments, he once said, he deliberately avoided trying for the valedictory, — the highest honor, — and determined to take the second. Being no speaker, — however, he received only an English oration. His subject was a discussion of "The Comparative Value of a Scientific and Military Reputation." The slight offered to his elocution stimulated his pride, and "accordingly," he said, "I took much pains to prepare myself; I practised myself in distinctness; *I articulated my words.*" The result showed his ability; for President Dwight remarked to him, "Why, Percival, I wish I had

His commencement oration.

known you were able to speak so well, we would have given you the *Valedictory*." * And when he delivered his oration at Commencement, the Doctor said to a friend that Percival was the most remarkable scholar he had known for many years. Percival always said that he was not properly estimated, and did not have justice done to him in his college appointment. He expected from his scholarship that he would have the offer of a tutorship. But this his peculiar manners prevented. Says Dr. Barnes: "He was very desirous of praise or the good opinion of mankind."

In addition to his graduating oration, he wrote and took an active part in a tragedy, "of merit, and ^{writes a} full of fire," remarks Dr. Gridley, who saw it, ^{tragedy.} "and having the unusual accompaniment of a dagger, which he used himself with the skill of an accomplished tragedian." It was afterwards published in his first volume of poetry under the title of *Zamor*. The scene is laid in Spain in the time of the Moors. It is a story of love and passion and murder, but hardly worthy of a place beside his more finished efforts, though a theatrical manager in Philadelphia once proposed to put it on the stage. In the unusual bustle of Commencement, Percival was busy in preparing his tragedy; and the late Professor Olmsted well remembered sleeping in a large room with him and several others the night before Commencement, and how the youthful poet got up from his couch after he supposed the others were all asleep, and paced the floor silently in the moonlight while going over his part.

The venerable President Day tells me that the only censure ever applied to Percival in college was ^{Peculiar} for writing some verses on one of the pillars in ^{ways.}

* Percival's Poems, Vol. I. p. xix.

the Chapel during prayers. Percival thought he did not deserve it.

His dress was always a little peculiar. In college he wore light clothes in summer, gray in winter. When he went home to become a farmer the rustiest clothes were not bad enough for him; and when he was ready to return to college, the best broadcloth was hardly good enough. He had a new gray suit at Commencement. While others wore their hair long, he had his short; while others shaved, he allowed his beard to grow; and throughout life he never blacked his shoes.

One or two stories are told by Dr. Gridley in regard to this period of his life which are worth preserving: "Percival was no joker. But I remember in one instance when we were returning from college at the close of the term in the same carriage, and had passed on Wallingford plains a shabby, seedy-looking man with a jug (rum probably), he remarked, 'That man has got his *indispensable*.' In those days the bags or satchels carried in their hands by the ladies were called '*indispensables*.'

"I do not recollect ever seeing Percival ride or drive a horse, but I have the very best reason to know that on one occasion he did undertake it. Near his home was a very high and regularly formed rise of land, known as Turkey Hill, commanding an extensive and beautiful prospect from its summit, and withal of so regular and gradual ascent, that the apex, on which was a solitary white-oak, could be reached without difficulty not only on horseback, but in a carriage. It was free from stones and rocks, and was cultivated to the very top. On a certain time, in college vacation, I believe, Percival invited a couple of young lady friends to take a carriage

ride to this romantic spot, and enjoy the rich view. They were in the village some three miles from the hill. He called for them, helped them into the carriage, entered himself, and took up the reins ; and, lo ! the horse was in the position of a certain animal of old, ' tied ' fast to the post, and needed to be loosed before he could go. I had some years after the authority of one of the young ladies for this statement."

There is a page in one of his Senior note-books, headed " Dr. Dwight's Advice," written so badly I can hardly decipher it, but which appears to be a ^{Dr. Dwight's} advice. synopsis of his parting lecture to Percival's class. It urges strongly upon the young men that they should all engage in some active work, teaching or business, if they had nothing else in view, on leaving college. It is possible this was also given to Percival alone. For he once intimated to a friend that President Dwight truly read his character in a remark which he made to him on leaving college. It was in substance this : " Percival, you must engage in some active employment, or you are a ruined man."





CHAPTER IV.

1815-1820.

STUDIES MEDICINE AT HOME. — GOES INTO SOCIETY IN HARTFORD. — AN EARLY FRIENDSHIP. — WRITES TO DR. IVES. — IN ILL HEALTH. — WRITES POETRY. — PRIVATE TUTOR IN PHILADELPHIA. — STUDIES LAW. — PARTLY TRANSLATES A WORK ON BOTANY. — AGAIN A TUTOR IN PHILADELPHIA. — IN LOVE. — TAKES THE DEGREE OF M. D.



WITH his diploma in hand, Percival now came home to Kensington to enjoy in that beautiful region the delicious lull and pause which is usual with young men before they engage actively in the study of a profession. Dr. Dwight's advice was fresh in mind; and he at once gave himself to the choice of a calling. His own tastes and the example of his father led him to the study of medicine. And his choice was further aided by an interest in botany, which from a child's fondness for flowers, had lately, in his Senior year, been changed into the eager passion for riper knowledge, which he gratified by studying in leisure hours with his friend Dr. Ives, with whom botany, aside from his profession, was an all-absorbing pursuit. His father's successor in Berlin was Dr. Ward. He had, for the times, a large medical library; and Percival modestly asked leave, one day, to come and "look over his books." It was readily granted; and before the Doctor was up the

Choosing a
profession.

Studies
medicine
with Dr.
Ward.

next morning, his pupil was at the door, waiting to begin his studies. During the day, as Dr. Ward passed in and out, he saw Percival apparently only fumbling over the books. He told him, as you would a school-boy, that he ought to take up the elementary books first, but Percival paid no attention to his remark. Thus employed for several weeks, he at length inquired about the library of Dr. Ives in New Haven. Dr. Ward, deeming this a fit opportunity, now took him to task for spending his time without serious devotion to his studies. He replied that he had looked over nearly all the books. The Doctor then told him he should begin with physiology, and took down a volume to show what he meant. Percival said he had looked that through; and, to see what he knew about it, the Doctor asked a series of questions, to which he replied in nearly the words of the book. He then went through with his whole library in the same manner, and found that Percival had its contents at his tongue's end. His tuition under Dr. Ward was now ended. He therefore made inquiries about the library of Dr. Ives, then one of the leading physicians in Connecticut, and a little later wrote to him, proposing to read medicine at his office. To this he received a favorable reply, but did not at once resume his studies.

At about this time he was invited by his classmate, the late Rev. Horace Hooker, to visit him at Hartford, and enter into the literary society of his acquaintances. He gladly embraced the opportunity, and prepared himself to talk elaborately on particular topics. But he was not a favorite. He was too shy and modest to adapt himself with readiness to different circles. He wanted confidence, and at social gatherings he talked at great length on single subjects, but in so low a tone that

Goes into
society.

people could not hear him. He was not treated as he expected to be ; it seemed to him that he was not appreciated, and he came away in disgust. How keenly he felt this disappointment may be seen from one of his early poems, entitled *An Imprecation*. His wounded sensitiveness grew morbid in the brightness of his imagination. The following are the first and last stanzas : —

“Ismir! fare thee well forever!
From thy walls with joy I go,
Every tie I freely sever,
Flying from thy den of woe.”

“Ismir! land of cursed deceivers,
Where the sons of darkness dwell,
Hope, the cherub’s base bereavers, —
Hateful city! fare thee well.”

It is evident that he had looked forward to this entrance into literary society with intense eagerness and emotion. He longed for the kind recognition which is the craving of genius ; and when he saw that intellectual brilliancy could not vie with easy and polished manners, his depression was great.

He found few in his native place who had the education or the tastes which could respond to his own poetical and cultivated mind, yet there was one, the daughter of the Berlin pastor, and the sister of the late “Peter Parley,” whose beauty of person and elegant manners and refined tastes made her an attractive companion. At the parsonage he was always a welcome visitor, and with this young lady he “botanized in the fields and poetized in the library.” It was with her that he found his most congenial society ; and it is her name which occurs most frequently in the poems he now wrote. The following is a specimen of the breathings of his passion : —

Has a
young lady
acquaint-
ance.

"The morn is blinking o'er the hills
With softened light and colors gay;
Through grove and valley sweetly thrills
The melody of early day;

"The dewy roses blooming fair
Glitter around her father's ha'
But still my Mary is not there, —
The fairest rose is far awa'."

This was, perhaps, the most charming acquaintance that Percival ever had with any lady. Both were young and free from care. In the dewy freshness of emotion there was a delicate and tremulous enjoyment which inspired the poet's verses; and this lady, like the Highland beauty of Burns, will ever live in the ideal passion of Percival's verse. But this never became an affair of the heart. The young lady was already engaged to another, and gave to Percival only the affection and sympathy of a familiar friend.

He again wrote to Dr. Ives, after his return from Hartford, about coming to New Haven, and after some further delay finally came late in the fall of 1815. He did not enter the then newly established medical college, but was only a private student. Dr. Ives had taken a special interest in him, and quickly discerning the strength and the weakness of his nature, proposed this, as in his case the best method of study. But he did not make a long stay. He suddenly came back to Berlin without a word of explanation.

Some months after, probably in the spring of 1816, he wrote to Dr. Ives, but did not send, this statement of his condition: —

"SIR, — Had I never wavered, I should now freely address you, but my wanderings have been such that I

Wishes to
study with
Dr. Ives, and
does.

Letter to Dr. Ives. think some apology necessary for the proposition

I now make you. My situation last autumn, when in New Haven, was to me very disagreeable. My health was poor; my spirits were depressed; I had but a trifle of money at command and no speedy prospect of more. These things darkened my prospects to such a degree that I did then what I could wish now I had not done. I do not offer these as excuses for my conduct to others; they are, however, some excuse to myself. I wished to do something, and that not mean. This induced me to think of law, not because I supposed I could ever relish the pursuit, but because I thought, and think so still, that I could obtain that profession better with equal expense than medicine, and that seemed to me then the most important consideration.

"I knew that medicine was the profession most congenial to my mind. I believed it the most useful, and I think I should have eagerly pursued it, had my health been good, and had I seen my way open; but ill health, low spirits, and embarrassments will dishearten. I thought the desired point in that profession unattainable. I feared, if I engaged in it, that I should chain myself down to poverty and obscurity, and I then gave it up. I thought then I might bend my mind to any object. Immediately after I saw you I commenced reading Blackstone, and I have completed it, but I have
Tries the law and gives it up. at last found that there is really such a thing as
invita minerva.

"I am now disposed (I will not say determined, for
Is going to resume medicine because he likes it. I might not then be believed) to resume the profession of medicine. There is, I fancy, nothing which will bear one through the difficulties of a profession but a fondness for it. The love of

fame, or power, or money cannot, I imagine, counter-balance a strongly opposing inclination. I think I have found that in some small degree the case with myself. I observed to you last winter, that if I could see my way clear, I would certainly study medicine; but I would now say, I will study medicine and make my way clear. I must be strenuous and indefatigable in attaining such an object. But great things are not done by little efforts. Life is too short for a crawler to scale Olympus. It is the *res arduæ* which try the man. And if I can work my way through my difficulties and attain distinction, I shall have done and deserved more than if one should go forward, remove every obstacle, and make my path plain and easy before me. Some shrink back from difficulties, but the man of fortitude presses onward and overcomes them. Why may not that fortitude be mine?

“The proposal I would now make you is, to commence the study of medicine in the same way I proposed to commence it last fall. I have been able to sell a part of my land for three hundred and fifty dollars; this will carry me forward considerably; and I may in the mean time adopt some method which may add to my resources.”

He mentions one; he says, “I would willingly undertake the execution of a work on botany such as would be a tolerable library to the ordinary pursuers of the science.” He then goes on to sketch the outlines of this plan at some length. They were afterwards expanded into a course of lectures, which he delivered in New Haven.

Is willing
to write a
work on
botany to
earn money.

This letter plainly indicates his state of mind at this time. Great sensibility, ill health, and a constitutional despondency made him the prey of every emotion; and while the intellect was surpassingly quick and keen, it

was largely swayed by his feelings. Here at home he read Blackstone with the village lawyer, Mr. Dunbar, and made extensive notes of his readings. But with his varied activity, he employed himself in other kinds of work. His harp was now his constant companion, and a large part of his first volume was written at this time. These poems reflect, in their deep imaginative coloring, the extremes of joy or woe to which he was subject. They are, in a sense, truer than even the plainest words in prose, because they are so entirely personal; they seem to well out from his inmost being. The peculiarities of his earlier life, his shyness, his choice of solitude, his silence till the inspiration came upon him, his sudden and strange movements, — each feature is clearly reflected in them. The *Suicide*, written mainly at this time, is a wonderful revelation of the terrible grievances which besiege a self-consuming soul. It shows how dark thoughts passed over him, and how completely they absorbed his own interest in life. He had an imaginative scepticism, like Shelley, in regard to the Christian faith; and this deepened the gloom which was thickening over him. The purpose came upon him to take his own life. It was this state of mind which gave birth to *The Suicide*. The poem beginning

His literary
activity and
mental state.

Despondent
feelings.

“The last blue hill is fading from the sky,”

was probably written in anticipation of this event; and the verses beginning

“Care-worn and sunk in deep despondency,”

indicate the nature of his feelings. His disappointment in not obtaining a tutorship in college increased his troubles.

But all his changeful revolutions of feeling received a sudden check from an invitation to become a private tutor in the family of Judge Chauncey of Philadelphia. He accepted the position, and in his new relations found a more congenial atmosphere. Through the encouragement of Mr. Chauncey he again began the study of law in his office, and was finally admitted to the bar, though he never practised. In this interval he was too much occupied with his various studies to write poetry; and these were by no means confined to the law. He had ample access to the literary resources which the city then afforded, and he extended his knowledge in several departments of science.

He gave up his position as tutor in the fall of 1817, and returned to New Haven to begin the study of medicine, as he had proposed to Dr. Ives in the preceding letter. Here he found several of his old college friends,—William C. Fowler, Julius S. Barnes, and Horace Hooker. With them he at once renewed that confidential acquaintance which all his life was so dear to him. They became the critics of his poetry, the companions of his walks, the advisers in his fertile but often quickly abandoned plans. One of them, Mr. Hooker, tells me that at this time Percival was at his room nearly every day. He used to come in of a morning with a plan for a new book, or a new poem, or with new theories concerning the studies in which he was engaged. He would enlarge upon them brilliantly, exhaustively, seeming to have the subject entirely in hand, and when he went away, left the impression that he was to set about the immediate execution of his plan; but when he came again the next day he had a new project, and the one discussed so earnestly and feasibly the day before had been abandoned.

He was now partially dependent upon his own exertions. Dr. Ives, who felt a deep interest in him, and who had received him as a private student in his own office, tried to help him. He was one of the few originators of botanical science in this country. The study of botany with us was then in its infancy. Colden, near the close of the last century, was among the first to introduce the Linnæan system; and Muhlenberg, Barton, Elliott, and Ives were active disciples, gleaning what they could from books and nature. Pursh's "Plants of North America" had then been recently published in London, and Dr. Ives engaged Percival to translate it from the Latin for publication here. The Doctor had already begun it, but gave his manuscript to Percival, who worked on it constantly for a fortnight, nearly completing the first volume. He then came to the conclusion that the translation was doing him no good; it was no mental improvement; and he grew sick of his work, and left it unfinished. Dr. Ives, in the mean time, had procured a large list of subscribers, and the work, when completed by another hand, had such a large sale as to yield an annual income of a thousand dollars for some time.

He was not many months in New Haven before he was again invited to Philadelphia as tutor in the family of Dr. Neil. This gave him an opportunity to pursue his studies at the medical school in that city; and with the hope of paying his way, and of studying medicine with enlarged facilities, he gladly accepted the offer. His pupil was Dr. Neil's daughter. It is related of his teaching, that he taught as if his pupil knew more of the subject in hand than he did. But his time was largely spent in his studies. He saw much of

With Dr.
Ives, trans-
lating Pursh
on Botany.

Goes again
to Philadel-
phia.

medical practice in the hospitals. He made pleasant acquaintances among the students and faculty. In this way he spent his second interval of teaching, which lasted about a year. It was destined to come to a sudden end.

Percival once told a friend that he knew but two females before he entered college: one was a domestic in his father's family, the other was his mother. At Yale, though so modest and retiring, one or two beautiful faces attracted him, and he had found in the home of his village pastor those who appreciated his poetical feelings; but now he was in a most trying position for a very sensitive mind. While teaching his pupil, he had ^{Falls in love} nourished a silent affection for her, and with his ^{with his} pupil.

shrinking delicacy of feeling he could not tell his love. He was engaged in his customary instructions one day when he accidentally touched her hand. This so overcame him that he blushed deeply, became confused, could not say a word, and finally left the room suddenly, — never to return.

He speedily bade his friends adieu and came to New York, where he spent a short time, partly with friends, partly in visiting the hospitals. He then returned to New Haven in the latter part of 1819, and finally completed his studies with Dr. Ives. He had already acquired a wide reputation as a prodigy of learning and for his facility in acquiring knowledge. When it was known that he had applied for a medical degree, ^{Is exam-} there was considerable excitement about his ex- ^{ined for} amination. No one of the Medical Board dared ^{medical} degree.

to ask him questions out of his own province; and they examined him for several hours, trying, if possible, to exhaust his knowledge. But he came out triumphantly

from the ordeal ; and it was said at the time that no student had ever been proved with such severe tests and none had ever passed so brilliant an examination.

In September of this year he was named by Professor Silliman a member of the American Geological Society, then just organizing.

The following testimonials from his instructors, though written a year later and for a special purpose, testify to his high attainments and excellent character : —

FROM PRESIDENT DAY.

This may certify that Dr. James G. Percival, who was graduated at this college in 1815, was among the most distinguished in his class in talents and literary acquirements. I have also understood that, in the intervening six years, he has prosecuted scientific and professional studies with unusual assiduity and success.

JEREMIAH DAY,

President of Yale College.

YALE COLLEGE, September 17, 1821.

FROM DR. IVES.

This certifies that Dr. James G. Percival has passed through the academical and medical institutions in this college with much credit to himself and satisfaction to his instructors. He is a universal scholar, and as a naturalist is scarcely excelled by any person of his age in the United States. As a medical scholar I may safely say that, from the commencement of the Medical Institution in this place, no one in the examination for

a degree of Doctor of Medicine has appeared better than Dr. J. G. Percival. . . .

ELI IVES, M. D.,

Professor of Materia Medica and Botany.

YALE COLLEGE, September 21, 1821.

FROM DR. KNIGHT.

MEDICAL INSTITUTION OF YALE COLLEGE,
September 18, 1821.

I hereby certify that I have been for many years acquainted with Dr. James G. Percival. He attended a full course of lectures on the various branches of medical science in this Institution, and one also in Philadelphia. His examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine was highly creditable to himself and satisfactory to the Board of Examiners. He is a young gentleman amiable in his manners and moral in his conduct. He has been considered by those who have superintended his education as possessing more than ordinary talents, and his knowledge of the various branches of literature and science is rarely exceeded by persons of his age. He is particularly versed in most parts of the natural sciences. I have great pleasure in recommending him to any situation where industry and scientific attainments are required.

JONATHAN KNIGHT,

Professor of Anatomy and Physiology.

FROM PROFESSOR SILLIMAN.

YALE COLLEGE, November 23, 1821.

The bearer, Dr. Percival, is a graduate of this Institution and also of the Medical College attached to it.

Both in his academical and professional pursuits he has distinguished himself as a young man of talents and of fine attainments, both in literature and in general and professional science ; and all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance recognize him as a man of the mildest manners and of inoffensive deportment.

B. SILLIMAN,

*Professor of Chemistry, &c. in Yale College
and in the Medical Institution.*





CHAPTER V.

1820.

LECTURES ON ANATOMY. — A PHYSICIAN IN KENSINGTON. — OFFERS HIMSELF TO HIS FORMER PUPIL. — IS REJECTED. — IN GREAT MENTAL DEPRESSION. — MASTERS HIS PASSION. — HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS. — ATTEMPTS TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

HE continued to remain in New Haven after taking his degree. For a season, while engaged in his studies, he had a number of private pupils, among whom were the two sons of Dr. Ives. One of them distinctly remembers Percival as his instructor at this time. He tells me that he used to go up to his room to recite, and that often the poet would be so engaged in his books that he did not notice him for a good while; and that sometimes he would go in to recite, and sit with his books under his arm and go away again, without Percival's knowing that he had been there at all.

He was also employed by the Medical College to deliver a course of lectures on Anatomy, which, the poet Bryant tells me, attracted a good deal of attention for the unusual clearness and excellence of his demonstrations of the human frame. He was interested, too, in the study of language; and to test some of his theories he spent considerable time with the Indians.

But the time came for him to engage in his profession.

He wished to establish himself as a physician. There
Goes to Ken-
sington to
practise. was an opening at Kensington; and he was in-
 vited to fill it. He took up his residence at the
 old homestead. Here he brought his library and pursued
 his studies of the various languages. In due time he
 began to be known to the farmers and country people
 around him. At this season a certain malignant fever
 was raging, which baffled the skill of the best physicians.
 There was a family sick with it at the head of the mill-
His practice. pond, near his home. They had seven chil-
 dren. Dr. Ward asked them to send for Per-
 cival, who came and prescribed for them. But he was
 unable to check the violence of the disease. Five
 of the smaller boys died in quick succession, two only
 one or two days apart; they were from two to twelve
 years of age. The disease was apparently brought on
 by their wading about in the mud. He had other pa-
 tients sick with the same disease, five of whom died on the
 same day. Such mortality alarmed him. He was un-
 willing to bear the responsibility laid upon the physician.
 He said afterwards to Dr. Barnes: "I could not bear to
 have people looking to me for *relief* and not be able to
 relieve them." This was the end, so far as I can learn,
 of his medical practice in Kensington. There is a
 story that he was disgusted with the desire which some
 showed to "beat down" his charges, or to pay him in
 kind, and that, yielding to the impulse of the moment,
 he threw his ledger into the fire; but I cannot find that
 it is true.

The failure of his attempt at practice brought on again
Is involved
in trouble. the gloom which had been once averted; but it
 was not this alone. His sudden departure from
 Philadelphia had not changed his affection for his former

pupil ; and a short time before he left New Haven to engage in practice at Kensington, probably in April or May, 1820, he wrote her a letter declaring his pas- <sup>Offers him-
self to his
pupil.</sup> sion. To this letter he received a reply in the handwriting of a member of the family, from which I take the following extract : “ Your former pupil, though impressed with a grateful sense of the services she received from you, (which we always fully appreciated,) and feeling the esteem she believed due to your character and principles, never, I must candidly assure you, had a thought which could for a moment encourage the object you avow. Kindness for you and the dictates of duty prompt me to inform you at once that there are existing circumstances which must now and forever render such a desire unavailing.” To this the poet replied in a letter which, I am told, was equally a credit to his head and heart. But it was not easy for him to forget his passion, however easily he could conquer it ; and being in ill health, without regular employment, and disposed to melancholy, he now passed through a season of most bitter trial. He had always been a free-thinker in religion ; and now his sensitive imagination and misanthropic feelings conjured up doubts and fears which only darkened his way. At this time his classmate, Dr. Barnes, fortunately called upon him in Kensington. He says : “ I found him in such a state of mind that I saw the clergyman of the parish, Mr. Royal Robbins, and requested him to see him and endeavor to turn his thoughts into a different channel.” The Kensington pastor kindly sought his society, companioned with him, and gained his confidence, but it did not lighten his thickening gloom. Mr. Robbins gave me the following record of one of his conversations with him : —

“That Percival was sceptical on the subject of revealed religion at an early period of his life, I suppose, His religious views. must be admitted by every one. I remember conversing with him one evening on the subject. He seemed not to be satisfied with the religion of the Bible, objecting to it, if I mistake not, as appealing too much to our selfish feelings and fears. In order to confute him or to have him point out a better or purer system, I referred him to some deistical writers, to learn whether he thought that they inculcated such a system. He did not, however, make out much in favor of those named, and it would certainly be difficult for any one to do it. After more or less remark he left me with the impression that he thought pretty well of Lord Herbert, giving him the preference, perhaps not to the writers of the Scriptures, but to his brother-sceptics.

“Whether Percival thought on the subject of religion in his latter days as he did in earlier life I do not know. I hope he did not, and that he became more cautious on the subject, as his mind embraced a wider compass of knowledge.”

He said to Dr. Barnes at this meeting, “I do not wish to live any longer.” The troubles and disappointments of his past life came up afresh. He became erratic in his movements. Once, while walking with Mr. Robbins, he set out on a full run across the fields, attempting to strike his head against a wall. He wandered Partly insane, and thinking of suicide. in the woods and solitary places. In the orchard fronting the house he would strike his head against the trees. Though the friends knew that this was due to the peculiar nature of the disease which affected his mind, his sad condition excited their profound pity. Yet they could do nothing for him. The causes

of his troubles were too deeply and peculiarly seated to be reached by medicine or friendship. It would form one of the most touching and important chapters of psychological science if the inner history of his mind at this time could be fully written. But this could have been done only by his own pen. It is a curious fact, therefore, that he has done this himself; and that, too, in the most impassioned and personal manner. The Suicide was only partially written in 1816. Three fourths of it was composed when he looked upon suicide only as a romantic poetical dream; a possible reality. The remainder was written after an event which, in some respects, formed the crisis of his life. It was an actual attempt ^{Attempts at suicide.} at suicide. His mind and heart had become depressed till life was a burden and he longed in full reality to die. In this extremity, he suddenly left his home for Farmington, a neighboring town, to procure, as he afterwards said, such a quantity of opium as would take away his life. A few days before — such was the pressure at his head — he had attempted to fracture his skull with a large cobble-stone, which he hurled with full force against his forehead. At this time he chose a more certain method. It was the general opinion, when he disappeared, that he was intent upon some measure to take his life, and search was made, but without success, to find him. Suddenly he appeared in the orchard near the house, and was seen walking to and fro, holding his hand to his mouth, as if he were chewing something. A little later, his brother, returning from the mill, saw persons leading him about in the yard. He had taken an overdose, and was in a pale sweat and great pain. His brother asked him if he had been chewing opium. He replied that he had; and to his brother's further

question whether he had any more, he drew a small ball from his vest pocket and threw it violently upon the ground. He was then taken to the house, and the servant was ordered to prepare some very strong coffee as an antidote to the poison ; and he soon grew better. But the spell of a madman was yet upon him ; and his next plan was to go to the Bay of Fundy and let the swiftly rising tide engulf him. This was abandoned. His last plan, made soon after, was to go to Middletown to buy a brace of pistols to shoot himself through the head. He had taken a bee line for the place, and was in the middle of a field, when all at once his disease left him ; the pressure at his head was gone, and he said to himself (so he afterwards remarked), "I will live and take what God gives me" ; and turning about, he went home a sane man. This peculiar visitation never came to him again ; but traces of it may be found in his extreme sensitiveness, and in the vacillation to which he was subject for many years, and in his almost confirmed ill health.

The following portion of *The Suicide* was written after these attempts at self-destruction, and embodies, no doubt, his own feelings as he entered the mysterious confines of dissolution. It is the only instance in literature where the dying agonies of a suicide have been set forth in the burning words of impassioned poetry : —

" When life was weak and faint, his ardent soul
Unfolded all the vigor of its powers ;
Then through the fields of lore he flew, and stole,
With ceaseless toil, the honey of its flowers.

" His heart expanded with his growing mind,
And love, and charity, and thirst of fame,
Unbending worth, ambition unconfined,
O, these he wished, his bosom's only aim !

- " O, he would think of these, until the glow
Brightened his cheek and kindled up his eye;
Then in a rushing flood his thoughts would flow,
And lift him to the all-o'erarching sky.
- " And yet his soul was tender; — there was one
Who made his heart throb and his pulses beat;
She was his all, his only light, his Sun, —
Her eye was brightest, and her voice most sweet
- " She was to him an angel; — he was young,
The down of youth had just begun to grow;
His eye forever on her image hung,
There would his centring thoughts forever flow.
- " O love how ill requited! — could a soul,
Then soaring to perfection, blend with one,
Who only thought of transient sport, whose whole
Enjoyment ceased below, where his begun?
- " And then his fearfulness and shrinking eye, —
She knew her power, and yet she could not know
The worth of him who doated; — with a sigh
Of grief and wounded pride he let her go.
- " First love, — with what a deep, strong, fixed impress
It prints the yielding heart of childhood! Gone,
No other eye the lone, lost soul can bless,
Hope then is fled, the feelings are undone.
- " How all unequal were his mind and form!
This knew the blinking owls, that shunned his light;
To wound his bosom, and to raise the storm
He ill could master, seemed their sole delight.
- " Abused, neglected, fatherless, no hand
To guide or guard him, left alone to steer
His dangerous way, — can youth securely stand,
When not a parent, friend, or hope is near?
- " He conquered in intelligence, but those
Who felt his strength there, still his weakness knew;
They crushed his spirit first, and then, to close
Their work, they made him like their grovelling crew.

"The light of Heaven was gone, — ambition still
Lurked with him to the last, but he was blind;
And genius struggled on through every ill,
But peace and innocence were left behind.

"Years hurried by, — but what a raging sea
Was that young heart, — wild as a steed he ran,
Till he was swallowed in misanthropy,
And swore eternal enmity to man.

"And yet he could not hate, — at every look,
That told the wounded bosom's throbbing swell,
His frame in sympathetic shivering shook,
His hand, though raised in wrath, in pity fell.

"He longed to cast his hateful chains away,
He longed to be all virtue, reason, soul;
In vain he strove against the headlong sway
Of passion, — till its gulf absorbed the whole.

"Mid all his folly, weakness, guilt, one beam
Across the darkness of his being shone, —
Most dastardly and shameful did he deem
To take one mite that was not all his own.

"She came, — at last the kindred spirit came,
The same bright look, the same dissolving eye;
Her bosom lit with that ethereal flame,
Which warmed him, when in youth his soul was high.

"Informing and informed, theirs was the pure
Delight of blended intellect, — their way
Was strewed with reason's choicest pleasures, sure
To last with those whom guilt leads not astray.

"Awhile his spirit kindled, — hope, and love,
And friendship, days of peace and joy arose,
And lifted all his ardent thoughts above
The memory of his follies and his woes.

"His way had been unequal, — now he soared
On rushing wings, and now he sunk in night;
But then he felt new life around him poured,
He aimed to Heaven his strong, untiring flight.

" 'T was but a moment, — like the dying flash,
The soul's last sparkle, ere its lights are fled;
Then folly came, his kindling hopes to dash,
And hide his spirit with the moral dead.

" Too late! too late! thou couldst not call him back,
With all thy charms thou couldst not: guilt, despair,
So long had dogged him in his wayward track,
They quenched the light that once shone bravely there.

" An outcast, self-condemned, he takes his way,
He knows and cares not whither; he can weep
No more, — his only wish his head to lay
In endless death and everlasting sleep.

" Ah, who can bear the self-aborring thought
Of time, chance, talent, wasted, — who can think
Of friendship, love, fame, science, gone to naught,
And not in hopeless desperation sink?

" Behind are summits, lofty, pure, and bright
Where blow the life-reviving gales of Heaven;
Below expand the jaws of deepest night,
And there he falls, by power resistless driven.

" The links that bind to life are torn away;
The hope, the assuring hope of better days,
Friendship, that warms us with a genial ray,
And love, that kindles with an ardent blaze.

" These he has left, and books have lost their charm;
The brightest sky is but a veil of gloom,
His mind, hand, useless, where can be the harm
In drawing to his only couch, the tomb?

" Ye, who abused, neglected, rent, and stained
That heart, when pure and tender, come and dwell
On these dark ruins, and, by Heaven arraigned,
Feel, as you look, the scorpion stings of hell.

" But no! your cold, black bosoms cannot feel;
Amid the rank weeds, flowers can never blow;
Your hearts, encrusted in their case of steel,
No feelings of remorse or pity know.

"Yes, you will say, poor, weak, and childish boy,
Infirm of purpose, shook by every sigh,
A thing of air, a light, fantastic toy, —
What reck we if such shadows live or die?

"But no! my life's blood calls aloud to Heaven,
The arm of Justice cannot, will not sleep;
A perfect retribution shall be given,
And Vengeance on your head her coals shall heap.

"Where minds like this are ruined, guilt must be,
And where guilt is, remorse will gnaw the soul,
And every moment teem with agony,
And sleepless thoughts in burning torrents roll.

"And thou, arch moral-murderer! hear my curse:
Go, gorge and wallow in thy priestly sty;
Than what thou art, I cannot wish thee worse, —
There with thy kindred reptiles crawl and die."





CHAPTER VI.

1821, 1822.

EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE. — PERCIVAL AN AUTHOR. — THE MICROSCOPE. — HIS FIRST VOLUME. — REVIEWED BY EDWARD EVERETT. — GOES TO CHARLESTON, S. C. — WRITES POETRY FOR THE CHARLESTON COURIER.



TO properly appreciate the introduction of Percival into the world of letters, it is necessary to wait a little at the threshold, to see who were his peers forty and fifty years ago. At the close of the last century our literature was mainly confined to theology and forensic eloquence, political papers and practical essays, and our popular reading was limited to the witty but superficial writers of Queen Anne's reign. But the *Monthly Anthology*, begun in 1803, had already in its service a body of young writers who have since gained high honors in literature; and when the *North American Review* took its place, in 1815, the country gave promise of general literary activity. The influence of the Revolution was passing away; the restrictions laid upon commerce were removed; new tastes were called forth by the importations of fresh volumes from England and the Continent; and for the first time, the foundation was laid of a truly American literature.

It is worth our while to note this awakening of a new life in letters. Philip Freneau was almost the first who

stood out after the Revolution from the crowd of contemporary poets. Charles Brockden Brown had already published the first original work of fiction, *Wieland*, in 1798. But the original works at the close of the century were few. Nearly all the men who have given tone and power to American literature were born between 1790 and 1800, and first came before the public in the interval of 1812 and 1821. Salmagundi and Irving's Contemporary authors. *Knickerbocker* had been printed but a short time. The younger Buckminster had created a wonderful impression by the stirring eloquence of his discourses, and had died in his early prime. Moses Stuart was just beginning his *Hebrew Grammar*; Dr. Robinson was entering upon those studies which culminated in his *Biblical Researches*; J. T. Buckingham and W. L. Stone were raising the standard of journalism; Dr. J. W. Francis was adorning the medical profession with the literary culture of a gentleman of the old school; Benjamin Silliman was ardently engaged in awakening an interest in scientific pursuits; Dr. Eli Ives was exciting a taste for botany among the students at Yale; Allston had just returned from a season of study in Europe; and Dr. Dwight was in the height of his fame as a college president. In 1812, Hillhouse produced *The Judgment*; and Allston, Irving, and Bryant soon followed with volumes which have since become classic. In 1816, Pierpont published his *Airs of Palestine*; in 1817, Professor Ticknor gave an impulse to letters by his lectures on *Modern Literature*. Cooper was then about to initiate a new school of fiction; Dana was nursing that heart-reading thought, which presently streamed out rich and full in *The Idle Man*; Channing, with his fine taste, was just entering upon his famous controversy; Drake was

filling his fancy with those airy nothings, which afterwards grew into form in *The Culprit Fay*; Maria Brooks was slowly training her imagination for the impassioned scenes of *Zophiel*; Halleck had published his *Fanny*; Everett had begun his work at Cambridge and in the *North American Review*; and Webster, Calhoun, and Clay were entering upon their famous triumvirate in the American Senate.

Across the water, a new era was breaking upon literature in England. Any history of English poetry would be incomplete without noticing the new Literature
in England. spirit infused into it about the beginning of the present century. It is not difficult to trace its origin. Before the days of Cowper and Crabbe, poetry had sunk to the level of smooth conceits and clever epithets, having wholly lost the nerve and force of the Elizabethan writers; these poets returned to native and simple sentiment. Much of their merit arises from the fact that they were the leaders of a great reform in literature. They first gave expression to feelings long held as beneath the dignity of letters. In many minds they quickened cravings for truthful and earnest utterance, aspirations toward a spiritual renewing of life, and longings to know men and women as they actually lived. Among the leaders in this reform were Wordsworth and Coleridge. The violent change of opinions through which they passed in early life was significant of the far deeper change in the entire realm of sentiment and feeling. With Coleridge the spirit of reform penetrated every thought; but while his life was spent in efforts to build up a new and comprehensive system of philosophic belief, poetry had only a limited share of his attention. In Wordsworth the change was no less radical, but his mind was not so richly and variously en-

dowed as that of Coleridge. He, however, saw clearly the path in which his true vocation lay, and, with a sublime self-confidence, walked boldly on, regardless of fear and favor, till he gained his end. The heroism of action pales somewhat beside that of thought, for the struggles of the latter are more costly to the spiritual nature, and hence more noble ; and Wordsworth's belief that he had poetic gifts which the world needed, even before he had brought them out, and his trust in the ultimate success of his poetry while his works remained unread, have a touch of the heroic as rare among poets as it is precious. It is always allowed them to sing of deathless fame, but the sincerity and calm, consecrated earnestness of Wordsworth kept his trust from lapsing into extreme license, while popular neglect, sarcastic criticism, the slow growth of sympathy, and the final triumph, which in turn met his efforts, made manifest at every stage his independence and inherent energy of character. His ends were worthy of the spirit in which they were urged on to success. He aimed at completing the work which Cowper had begun. Casting aside the conventional phrases and terms then common in poetry, he set forth the influence of Nature upon the soul. He himself had "sight of that immortal sea which brought us hither," and in many winged snatches of poetic thought breathed its immortal life into his fellow-men. But he did not work alone. While Coleridge was struggling to quiet his own mind tossed amongst the wrecks of ancient thinking, Shelley was putting into verse his solitary communings with nature, Keats was lost in an almost pagan devotion to the spirits of the forest and the stream, and Byron, amid wild gusts of passion, showed that he had at times intense sympathy with all that was best in the new poetic age then opening.

In 1821 Percival came into company with these men by publishing a small, dingy-looking 18mo of 346 pages, containing the first part of his *Pro-metheus*; *Zamor*, a tragedy which he rejected from his later volumes; and a large number of other poems, more varied in character and versification than had yet come from the pen of any native poet. Although it met with a kind reception, works of a purely literary character, like *The Sketch-Book* and *The Idle Man*, were not enough in demand to make their publication remunerative; people of cultivated tastes were few in number, often widely separated from each other, and too much occupied with professional life to give more than a glance at the literature of the day, while many then devoting themselves to literature had struck upon veins of thought quite new to that generation. Here we date the rise of whatever is original and peculiar in American letters. In the writings of Dana, the novels of Brown and Cooper, the essays of Irving, and the poetry of Drake, Bryant, and Percival, we find a certain freshness of thought and individual sentiment, which, however much resembling that of English writers of the same age, is as different in its character as new habits of national life and a return to nature and individual experience and thought could make it.

The following letter from Mrs. Louisa C. Tuthill, herself a writer of note, explains graphically the circumstances which led to Percival's first appearance as an author.

PRINCETON, N. J., June 8, 1863.

DEAR SIR, —

You ask of me some reminiscences of the poet Percival.

Poor Percival! Vividly was he brought to mind by an old letter on which I laid my hand a few days since. The coarse sheet of foolscap is in the "sere and yellow leaf," and the crooked, cramped chirography betrays at a glance the sad condition of the poet when it was written.

In order to understand Percival's letter, some prefatory explanation is necessary. In the year 1820, three intimate friends at New Haven, desiring to cultivate a taste for literature among the young people of that city, established a semi-weekly paper, to be made up entirely of original articles of an æsthetic character. This little semi-hebdomadal, designed for merely local circulation, was entitled "The Microscope, edited by a Fraternity of Gentlemen. 'Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.'—VIRG." The gentlemen of the fraternity were Nathaniel Chauncey, Cornelius Tuthill, and Henry E. Dwight; Mr. Tuthill being the principal editor.

In the Microscope many who have since become distinguished authors made their first literary essay,—plumed their wings for a higher flight. Others, who would have become equally distinguished, early journeyed to "the better land." Among these were Professor Fisher of Yale College, the profound scholar and mathematician, whose youthful genius astonished men grown gray in pursuit of science; the poet Brainard,* who

"By the wayside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life";

* He was the classmate of Percival. He had a mind of great brilliancy, but was called the laziest man in his class. His poems, with a memoir attached, were published in Hartford in 1842.

Cornelius Tuthill, who, though young himself, had nobly earned the title of "the young man's friend"; the brilliant and much-loved Henry E. Dwight, who, having prepared himself by study and foreign travel for extensive usefulness, ripened early for "glory and immortality."

"Sic itur ad astra."

James Gates Percival was associated with this fraternity in the *Microscope*. The diffident author was then a medical student at New Haven. Mr. Tuthill made his acquaintance through Mr. William C. Fowler, then a tutor in the college, and solicited contributions for his paper. Percival, on condition that he should remain anonymous, at a later period placed all his manuscripts in the hands of Mr. Tuthill, requesting him to select from them such pieces as he deemed worthy of publication. The poetry, however, was far from valueless in the estimation of the bashful author; he had carefully copied it into a large volume. Many of the fugitive pieces were juvenile productions, many others were the mournful utterances of a solitary, desponding being, unfit to be among the bustling crowd of busy men. The longest poem, entitled *The Suicide*, filled *twelve* pages of the *Microscope*. It is as crude and sombre as Stonehenge, and might have been written by one of the Druids. Though some of the lines are weak and others rough, yet there are ever and anon lightning-flashes revealing the innate power and vivid imagination of the writer.

The following stanzas are from *The Suicide* : —

"What if I pry beyond the yawning grave;
Is there a light can point my wildered way?
Is there an arm of Mercy stretched to save?
O help that arm, and guide me, genial ray!

"I look, but all is darker than the gloom
That hung, a sooty mist, o'er Egypt's land;
I listen, all is stiller than the tomb;
There is no ray, — no Mercy's outstretched hand.

"Come, then, each busy devil to my breast,
Come every fiend of hell and nestle there!
Rack me! Religion cannot give me rest;
If Mercy will not whisper, — yell, Despair."

This is sufficiently Byronic in spirit! The Suicide, unfortunately, serves rather as an exponent of the author's melancholy than of his genius.

While his poems were being published and admired, Percival left New Haven and went to his paternal home in Berlin, Connecticut. It was at this time that the one master-chord of feeling was touched, "the tones of whose vibrations are loudest and longest, which blends with and perchance overpowers all other emotions." Yet, with that reticence which was a salient feature in the idiosyncrasy of Percival, "he never told his love." This concealed and hopeless passion no doubt increased the melancholy to which he had been predisposed from early boyhood.

He now frequently wandered day and night in the woods, and led somewhat of that hermit-life which, in after years, rendered him an object of much interest and curiosity to the people of New Haven. While his intellect was thus partially eclipsed, he wrote poems, in the Greek style, arranged to form urns, vases, goblets, hearts, and other fanciful designs. Percival had scarcely recovered from this deep despondency when he wrote the following letter.

TO CORNELIUS TUTHILL.

BERLIN, November 1, 1820.

CORNELIUS TUTHILL, ESQ.:

DEAR SIR, — I received a short time since a letter from your colleague, Mr. Dwight, in which he informed me that he would leave my manuscripts with three entire copies of the *Microscope* in a package at Dr. Ives's. I should not be able to get them from Dr. Ives, and I am unwilling they should be left there, for particular reasons. Cyprian Hart, of the Junior Class, is a townsman of mine, and would, I think, bring them to me at the close of this term. If you would take the trouble to call on Hart and leave them with him, if he would engage to bring them to me, you would oblige me much. If not, I would thank you to keep them by you till next spring. I shall then be able to take them myself or send for them directly.

I should esteem it a favor to receive a line from you on the subjects of my poems. I have a strong desire to learn exactly what the public think of them. A drowning man catches at the last stick. It may be an idle thing for me to make this inquiry and for you to answer it; but I surely can be excused a vanity of which the sainted Cowper was guilty; for even he could not conceal his joy when told that Fox had quoted his *Task* in Parliament. I beg you to tell me all you know of the public opinion of my poems. I wish to know whether any of them are calculated to survive the mere trash of the day, or whether they are all *vox et præterea nihil*. I ask not this because I feel myself authorized to trespass on your time, but because you better than any other can gratify this last of my wishes.

Your friend,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

P. S. — I thank you for the copies of the *Microscope* you have proposed to send me. As the paper was to you a losing undertaking, I can consider them only as a gift. If the poems you have inserted have done the paper any credit, I am amply rewarded.

When this letter was received, Mr. Tuthill had gone to Europe; Mr. Chauncey and Mr. Dwight were out of town. Percival's manuscripts and a parcel for him had been left at the very place where, for "particular reasons," he did not wish them to be. Nobody could conjecture those reasons. Immediately I sent for the manuscripts and parcel, and wrote to him that they were in my possession and at his disposal. Possibly Percival may have preserved my letter, for it had an influence on his future career. The reception of his poems by the public was mentioned in the most flattering terms and the epistle concluded with some words to this effect: "Cheer yourself with the expectation of fame and usefulness, when the efforts of your genius are widely known."

The voice of praise came sweet and soothing to the ear of the despondent poet. A few weeks after the reception of the letter, he suddenly appeared before the writer. A tall, spare, bent figure; a thin, pale face; large, dark-blue eyes, which might have suggested the picture of the poet's, "in a fine frenzy rolling"; those remarkable eyes were fixed on me with earnest inquiry for a full minute, as the stranger stood upon the threshold of the open door. In a faint, scarcely articulate whisper, he at length said, "Dr. Percival."

Alarmed at his wild and melancholy expression, and still more at the mention of his name, I, however, led the way to a parlor, and motioned him to be seated. A

Mrs. Tuthill encourages him to become an author.

silence of some minutes followed, during which the poet trembled like a guilty culprit about to be condemned to condign punishment.

"Your manuscripts, — I will get them," I faltered out, and left the room.

When I placed the parcel in his hand, he said, "Encouraged by your letter, I am going to New York to get a volume of my poems published. What do you think of my tragedy?"

Against assuming the chair of the critic, with his *judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur*, youth and several other cogent disqualifications might have been pleaded, but the case was urgent, and the young novice, as the mouthpiece of the public, launched forth into enthusiastic, indiscriminate praise of the tragedy and the minor poems. In this case commendation unqualified was the best tonic for "the mind diseased."

The poet went on his way cheered and encouraged. Though still overshadowed by melancholy, he was at that time in as full possession of reason as at any subsequent period of his singular life. A few months after this unexpected interview, I received a volume of "Percival's Poems." And such a volume! Poor Percival! He who so dearly loved Elzevirs, and all other splendid editions of books! Some of your readers may remember that small duodecimo, badly printed

His early
volume.

on whity-brown paper, with its dingy yellow cover; its leaves all rough and ragged at the edges, — a humble *avant-coureur* of the beautiful volumes of Percival's poems which have since, from time to time, been issued from the English and the American press. During the year after the little volume appeared, Percival was a frequent visitor at my New Haven home. He did me the honor

to read to me, or to ask me to read to him, in manuscript, some of the sweetest poems he ever wrote. I well remember his sitting in almost breathless silence while I performed the difficult task of reading out to him the "Coral Grove." His ear was acutely sensitive; and a mistake in the rhythm or measure, or a wrong emphasis, would be distressing to him.

His voice was so low and monotonous as to render it almost impossible to keep up the connection in his conversation. One had to be satisfied with the beautiful glowing thoughts which occasionally reached the ear, and to fill up here and there a hiatus in the best manner that the taste and imagination of the listener could suggest.

Yours truly,

LOUISA C. TUTHILL.

While this was passing through the press, he was thinking, at the instance of his friends in Philadelphia, of making that city his future home, but nothing came of it.

The little volume had the following title-page: —

POEMS

BY

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

"Go, little book; from this my solitude
I cast thee on the waters, — go thy ways;
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world *may* find thee after *certain* days." — SOUTHEY.

NEW HAVEN:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR,

JULY 25, 1821.

The Preface which followed contains matters of biographical interest : —

“ I have a few things to say relative to this volume. I am not anxious to write an apology first. It must stand or fall by its own merits. But there ^{The Preface.} are certain circumstances connected with its composition and publication which I cannot, in justice to myself, forbear stating to the public. A large number of the smaller pieces have before appeared in the *Microscope*, a periodical paper published last year in New Haven. I have learnt from various sources that they were well received. I do not deny that this circumstance, in connection with the fact that they were copied into many prints of the day, has been some inducement to the publication of this volume. These pieces have been written at different ages. They have been accumulating on my hands for nearly ten years. I conceived it but just that I should give an index on this point. They have all been written to embody my emotions, or to give lightness to a heavy hour, with the exception of the Tragedy and the essay on the Drama. These were written for particular occasions. The greater part of the former was written some years since as a college exercise.

“ Perhaps some apology may be demanded for *The Suicide*. I can only say that it is intended as a picture of the horror and wretchedness of a youth ruined by early perversion, and of the causes of that perversion. It is not without a moral to those who can see it. I wish to impress upon the minds of all who read it the great danger of indulging the evil propensities, or tampering with the feelings of children. This is a truth which I have felt in the deepest recesses of thought and feeling ; and I would, if possible, lift my voice against all those

noxious arts which are daily polluting the stream of life, and sinking man lower and lower in degradation. In Prometheus I have written freely on a variety of subjects. It has been written so far under the influence of excited feelings, and so I will continue it. I esteem perfect freedom of thought my first and greatest privilege; and I glory that I live in a country where this privilege may be enjoyed. I trust I shall never become the advocate or the pander of vice. I trust I have not polluted these pages with aught that can render that monster less hateful or more alluring. I have said a few things in relation to Neapolitan liberty which are not in accordance with historical truth. I wrote them immediately on the reception of news more favorable than the reality. I have expressed opinions in this volume opposed to the commonly received opinions of society. I wish I could think differently, but I cannot. It is indeed a very comfortable and consoling thing to look from the sight and the feeling of so much wretchedness to a brighter being, where the most ardent mind may indulge in the most unbounded anticipations; but the mind which desires it most ardently may be too sadly convinced it is all a dream. This is the first time I have appeared before the world as an original author. It may be the last. I cannot say *exegi monumentum ære perennius*, but I have at least set myself up to be applauded, or neglected, or damned. On these points the public is sovereign; but I hope it will do me justice. I ask no more."

The book met with a very kind reception. No re-
 views, except the North American, lifted it into
 popular favor by the magic of their word; no
 patrons stood ready to take the trembling author by the
 hand; it was a new and strange event for a young man to

Its reception.

publish a volume of original poetry, and so few announced the poems. But Percival's name had already preceded him. His brilliant talents had attracted attention in college and while studying a profession. His peculiar life, his partially uncontrollable tendencies of temperament, had attracted many to him from sympathy, and more from curiosity. He was known to a few in Philadelphia, in New York, in Boston; and at Yale and in New Haven he had many who loved him and were glad to help him. In a quiet way the whole edition was sold in one year and four months from the day of publication; and his publisher says there was "a great call for the First Part of Prometheus."

The reception of it by the North American was so cordial that it deserves quotation. It was written by the late Edward Everett, and published in the number for January, 1822. He said: "The little volume which he has presented us contains the marks of an inspiration more lofty and genuine than any similar collection of fugitive pieces which has come to our notice from a native bard." "The Prometheus, like most of the other pieces, breathes a melancholy spirit too deep not to be real. We should sincerely regret that powers so fine as Mr. Percival evidently possesses should want the self-consciousness which they ought to inspire, or should feel doubt of that public favor they so truly deserve; and though he probably does not rely on anything he has yet written as giving him a fair title to the rank of an American classical poet, yet we feel no hesitation in saying that he shares with few the gifts which might make him one."

There is evidence that these words had much influence upon him. These were happy days. He was now in New Haven, off and on. His ambition was gratified at the sale

of his poems, and his mind was stayed by delightful anticipations of future authorship. One day, shortly after his book came out, he met his old friend Dr. Barnes in the street, and with an unusually happy expression upon his features, asked if he was going to remain long in town; and finding he was not, said, "Wait a minute"; then, running to his room, he brought down a copy of his little volume, and adding, "Here, take that," gave it to him and immediately disappeared. This is only one of the many instances of his shy and peculiar manner among his friends. At about the same time he met Professor Olmsted, to whom, with the same bashful delight, he offered his volume, and was greatly pleased when the Professor replied that he had already procured a copy and read it.

He was now engaged as Curator of the Botanical Garden which Dr. Ives had just formed. The
1821. Takes charge of a Botanical Garden. Doctor had received large quantities of seeds collected from different parts of the world, including over a thousand varieties from the King of France. These were given to Percival to plant, and he was at first delighted with his work. It gave full scope to his love of botany. But unfortunately he was now taken down three or four weeks with the typhoid fever; and when he recovered, he could not be induced to resume his duties. The following brief note, without date, announced his change of purpose:—

DR. IVES, —

A circumstance has arisen which induces me not to wish to be considered as engaged for the office. As you have not yet begun to fix it up, I hasten to give you this notice.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

The cause of his leaving was probably this. A Scotch botanical lecturer, by the name of Whitlow, who ^{Goes to Charleston, S. C., with a botanical lecturer.} had been in New Haven once before, and whose illuminated exhibitions of botanical specimens

had attracted large crowds, had returned to the city, and invited Percival to assist him, as they travelled through the country. It was in the line of his own preferences, and he engaged to go. They both set sail in a packet from New York in November, 1821, for Charleston, S. C., where they arrived about the beginning of the new year. It is a curious incident that, as the ship crossed the Charleston bar, his brother 1822.

Oswin was passing out, over the same bar, homeward bound, within hailing distance; yet neither one knew, at the time, of the other's nearness. Mr. Whitlow, who had great confidence in himself, was to do the lecturing, while Percival was to attend to the arranging of specimens and the other labors of an assistant. But it was not in the nature of things that such an engagement could last long. Whitlow was quick-tempered and violent and was not scientifically accurate in his descriptions of plants; and to Percival's fine scholarship the continual blunders of his partner were very annoying. ^{Leaves him.} In his honest demand for accuracy and truth he remonstrated; this made Whitlow angry, and they separated.

Percival was now alone, and without resources. But he soon found friends in the Babcock brothers, who had gone out from New Haven to set up a bookstore in Charleston. At first he determined to practise medicine. ^{Puts out his sign as a doctor.} He hired an office and put up his sign; but no patients came. Mr. Sidney Babcock tells me that he used sometimes to go out to walk with him while there. He saw him perhaps six times in all; and during one of

these walks, Percival said, "If I don't succeed in my profession, this country will not hold me." His reputation as a poet had preceded him. Alluding to this afterwards in a conversation with the late S. G. Goodrich, he said, "I had got my name up for writing verses, and found myself ruined." "How so?" asked Mr. Goodrich. He replied, "When a person is really ill he will not send for a poet to cure him."

He employed the leisure of his office in writing verses. Some of these were published in the Charleston Courier, then edited by one who had a genial appreciation of literature and of literary men,—Mr. A. S. Willington. To this he contributed his "Flower of a Southern Garden newly blowing," his Coral Grove, his Consumption, and those poems alluding to the sea and the loved ones far away, which appeared in the second number of Clio, and which in light cheerful sentiment and easy flow are among the best he ever wrote. The Courier was then the first literary paper in the South; and his chaste and fragrant poetry, breathing the finest aroma of nature and free from all touch of Byronism, and kindling with an inspiration like Shelley's, at once attracted attention. His signature was always P. It speedily became the nucleus of many warm friendships. The office was given up, and Percival was made a welcome guest in the most genial and accomplished circles in the city. He found a warm friend in the Rev. Samuel Gilman, D. D., the pastor of the Unitarian Society, and in those days a frequent contributor to the North American, and through him afterwards gained his first introduction to the literary circles of Boston and Cambridge. He also became intimate with William

People do
not like
poetical -
doctors.

Writes po-
etry for the
Courier.

Makes
friends of
Dr. Gilman
and others.

Crafts, a fellow poetical contributor to the Courier; and he had the acquaintance of the Gadsdens and the Elliotts, families whose society was all, in its tender delicacy and kind appreciation, which even so sensitive a poet as Percival could desire. There is every evidence in his poems, and in the traces left among his papers, that he kindly enjoyed the cheering atmosphere of Charleston, in those days the pride of Southern cities. It was the first warm sunshine in which he had ever basked.

His poetry drew forth the following response from a tuneful brother:—

“LOVE AT THE JOCKEY-CLUB BALL.

“Methinks, said Love, as I went to the race, A poetical
I’ll go to the ball, where each smiling Grace, tribute.
Like a band of sylphs in their mystic round,
Will lightly dance to the music’s sound.

“I’ll wear me a sash of the violet’s hue,
As bright as a harebell bathed in dew;
And I’ll go as a harper, and get from P.
His tuneful lyre of minstrelsy.

“And I’ll sweep its melodious silver string,
That rival beauty and youth may bring
A chaplet of bays for his brow, that he
May remember them, when he thinks of me.

“So said Love, — and away he flew
For Percival’s harp; for full well he knew,
That the Muses had destined his hand to bear
To their favored bard a gift so fair.

“E. J.”

In the Courier of February 12, 1822, he published the following poem, in which he plays cheerfully with his melancholy:—

" These weeping skies, these weeping skies,
 They weep so much, that I weep too;
 And everything, like Mary's eyes,
 Around, above, below, looks *blue*.
 Such days as these will never do,
 My Muse can never soar again;
 Her wings are wetted through and through;
 She tries to fly, but all in vain.

" Love brought a wreath, a laurel wreath,
 And it was steeped in fog, not dew;
 The little urchin drooped beneath,
 And gladly down his burden threw.
 The sylphs have sent the wreath to you,
 He laughed as he his errand told;
 What makes it look so very *blue* ?
 Says Love, ' It's only touched with *mould*.'

" I twined the wreath around my brow,
 And felt my brain grow numb and chill;
 If I had worn the wreath till now,
 My heart had been forever still.
 O, skies that weep so much will kill
 The Muses, and their servant, Love;
 Their home is on the sunny hill,
 Where naught is *blue* but heaven above."

The next day it brought him these lines, suggested by
 " your beautiful poetry which appeared in the *Courier* of
 yesterday " : —

" LOVE AND THE POET.

Another
 tribute.

" Says Love, no, no! ' to weeping skies '
 You must not Mary's eyes compare;
 Let dews descend or fogs arise,
 And darkly curtain earth and air.

" But Mary's eyes of ether blue,
 As sunbeams pierce the lowering gloom
 Through skies that weep, shall shine for you,
 Like stars that shades of night illumine.

“ Time’s gath’ring vapors quickly flee,
Like thistle-down, they ’re light as air;
They ne’er were meant for you or me,
You know we ’ve naught to do with care.

“ For here is but our transient home,
To bowers of bliss we soon shall go,
Where Eden’s flowers eternal bloom,
And streams of joy celestial flow. “E. J.”





CHAPTER VII.

1822.

CLIO No. I. — HIS POETRY POPULAR. — COMES BACK TO NEW HAVEN. — HIS HABITS IN CONVERSATION AND IN SOCIETY. — WISHES A PROFESSORSHIP IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY. — LETTERS TO MR. YVONNET. — HIS VIEWS OF WOMAN. — DISAPPOINTED IN HIS SUCCESS AS A POET.



Lectures on
Botany.

He publishes
Clio No. I.

S a means of support, he advertised in the Courier of January 14 to deliver his "Course of Lectures on Botany, to commence the second week in February." The terms were to be five dollars. And while the subscriptions were coming in, he was correcting the proof-sheets of the first number of his Clio, which was published at Charleston, January 26, 1822, by his friends the Babcocks. The title-page bore a motto from Petrarch: —

"Che sia fra i magnanimi pochi!"

His Preface shows plainly the idea and scope of the volume, which in poetry was an original venture in our literature. He says: —

"I might perhaps give the public, in rounded phrase, an apology for obtruding this volume on their notice; but I feel no inclination to beg for it that favor which its own merits will not obtain. I have not, like Geoffrey and the Idle Man, concealed my real name beneath a fiction.

I do not fear to answer for the offences of my own effusions, and I do not expect from them a weight of honor too great for my own shoulders to bear. I have offered this volume as the first number of a series which may perhaps be continued. But I make no promise. It may not only be the first, but the last of the family. At least, I do not intend to limit the appearance of these numbers to stated periods; but should I find myself warmed by the sun of public patronage, and feel my fancy free to expatiate in a happy vein, I shall, as soon as the materials are sufficiently accumulated, again embody them and give them to the world.

“If I mistake not, we are indebted to our distinguished fellow-citizen Irving (a man whom his country ^{Irving.} should be proud to honor, and who so becomingly discharges the functions of minister plenipotentiary of American taste and genius in the literary republics of Europe) for the plan of combining elegant essays and pleasing narratives, in numbers, which do not issue from the overdrawn fountains of monthly and quarterly literature, but roll on in vigorous fulness, when the burdened spirit lets loose its overflowings. In his own native land he had found his imitators springing up around him, like meadow flowers around our proudest lily;* and although we have seen none on whom his entire mantle has fallen, yet the Idle Man has added one improvement, by ^{Dana and Bryant.} winding up his numbers with the sweet touches of the gentle harp of Green River.† I have ventured to invert the order, and to place in the front rank

‘Words that move
In measured file and metrical array.’

* *Lilium superbum*.

† In allusion to one of Bryant's Poems.

This is indeed quite a modification of the experiment, and it remains to be learned how the public will tolerate a *periodical* poet, who, like the wandering minstrel of old, will take them in his round at certain seasons, and demand for his airy, unsubstantial offerings a *quantum sufficit* of more tangible existence. He intends to become a "periodical poet." I can plead, in my defence, the examples of the German bards Kotzebue, Lessing, and Bürger; but these Germans are a visionary race, who love to wander in the regions of mysticism and singularity, and are therefore not to be pleaded by a dweller in a country so enlightened and business-like as ours. I would not indeed wish to split hairs with Kant, nor dream of his possible transcendentalisms; nor would I seal the fate of a luckless wight by the unfortunate swell of his cranium; nor revel among the caverns and churchyards, the ghosts and goblins of moonstruck ballad-mongers; nor rake up the filth of human depravity and wretchedness to pour it over such pages as Melmoth and Bethlem Gabor; but I do think the plan of giving the public, now and then, a neat, tidy volume of verses and stories, in which perchance the music of measure shall predominate over the plain talk of prose,— I do think it the most harmless of all their conceptions I have met with, and the least likely to make mad lovers, mad doctors, or mad philosophers of anything they have dreamed of in the mysterious seclusion of their closets.

"But I will now speak more in earnest. I do not intend to give satires on the living manners, as they rise, nor broad grinning caricatures in the style of North & Co., but to delineate, as well as may be, the *beau ideal*. His views of poetry. Poetry should be a sacred thing, not to be thrown away on the dull and low realities of life. It should live only with those feelings and imaginations

which are above this world, and are the anticipations of a brighter and better being. It should be the creator of a sublimity undebased by anything earthly, and the embodiment of a beauty that mocks at all defilement and decay. It should be, in fine, the historian of human nature in its fullest possible perfection, and the painter of all those lines and touches, in earth and heaven, which nothing but taste can see and feel. It should give to its forms the expression of angels, and throw over its pictures the hues of immortality. There can be but one extravagance in poetry, — it is to clothe feeble conceptions in mighty language. But if the mind can keep pace with the pen, if the fancy can fill and dilate the words it summons to array its images, no matter how high its flights, how seemingly wild its reaches, the soul that can rise will follow it with pleasure, and find, in the harmony of its own emotions with the high creations around it, the surest evidence that such things are not distempered ravings, and that, in the society of beings so pure and so exalted, it is good to be present. I might go on to speak further of the nature and uses of poetry, but I will now forbear. Perhaps it may, hereafter, be the subject of a regular essay. At present, I will only observe that I may very possibly, and even probably, fail in my efforts at the *ideal*; and while soaring on feeble wings too near the warmth and brightness of greater spirits, may find myself, at the end of my excursion, fallen below the commoner level of existence, —

Sed virtus tentasse bonum."

He here touches lightly upon the general subject of poetry, though it is easy to be seen in what direction his tastes lay. Clio No. I. contained only one hundred and

eight pages, and twenty-four of these were taken up with prose essays, one on Magnanimity and the other A Picture of the Feelings and Musings of an Imaginative Mind. This had also his well-known metrical essay on Poetry, beginning, —

“ The world is full of poetry, — the air
Is living with its spirit.”

Its reception is thus alluded to by one of his correspondents, the Rev. James Lawrence Yvonnet, who was a student in the General Theological Seminary in New York at this time : —

“ As to literature, we have *The Spy*, by our fellow-citizen James Cooper; *The Pirate*; Lord Byron’s three dramatic productions, *Cain*, a *Mystery*, and *Sardanapalus*; and *The Two Foscari*, tragedies. We have some other productions, and periodical publications innumerable. But besides all these, I have now before me the latest work that has appeared in our city, *Clio*, by James G. Percival, No. I. I have seen but few literary gentlemen since I procured it; but I understand that it is well received.” And so it was.

In May, 1822, Dr. Underwood wrote to him from Philadelphia: “As far as my information extends, which is not indeed very extensive, your reputation as a poet of the first order is fast gaining ground.” But it was published too far away from the great literary centre of the country, and at a day when too few cared to buy poetry, to give the poet any more substantial reward than reputation. It was a great improvement, as a whole, on the one published six months previously.

While *Clio* was passing into the hands of its readers, the poet was repeating his Lectures on Botany to his Charleston friends, and enjoying their hospitality. But

when they were ended, he could not properly remain longer at the South. It was not the place for a dependent literary man to select as a home. Accordingly, ^{He leaves} on the 29th of March, 1822, he bade his friends ^{Charleston.} farewell and set sail for New York. A graceful tribute appeared in the *Courier* of the next morning from the pen of the editor:—

“Percival,* the American poet, who is reaping in the praises of his countrymen throughout the ^{Mr. Willing-} Union the fruits of his genius and the harvest ^{ton's tribute.} of his hopes, left Charleston yesterday in the *Empress* for New York. It is honorable to this country, that his talents should be so generally appreciated. He is destined to outlive many generations after this in the annals of men.

“We, in Charleston, loved him for the artless simplicity, the delicate sensitiveness, the sweet timidity of his spirit and his manner; and we admired the amazing fertility of his mind, always spontaneously pouring forth, as from an exhaustless spring, pure and beautiful and unearthly thoughts.

“We sympathized with him too, for he was at times melancholy and dejected, as Genius is when it is on the earth.

‘Now bathed in hues of heaven, the seraph glows,
And power and fame and wealth and worth bestows;
Now shrouds in gloom its dimly imaged form,
Glares through the clouds and wails amid the storm.’

“It was the charm of the *Courier* to be favored with the production of his muse. He left a few with us as a memorial. One of them is subjoined. It is bright and

* His poem, *The Farewell*, was evidently written with reference to this occasion.

pure and cold and melancholy, — such as you would expect from a fountain of elegant thought in a sensitive and brittle vase.

‘I saw on the top of a mountain high
 A gem that shone like fire by night;
 It seemed a star that had left the sky,
 And dropped to sleep on the lonely height.
 I climbed the peak and found it soon,
 A lump of ice in the clear cold moon.
 Can you its hidden sense impart?
 ‘T was a cheerful look, — and a *broken heart*. — P.’ ”

The poems over the signature P. had prepared the people of New Haven to better recognize the genius of one whom they could claim as their own poet. He returned to that city late in the spring. Appre-
He has sunny days. ciative people opened their doors cordially to him now, and his own experience with the more social ways of the South prepared him to enjoy society; and this he did to a great degree, but ill health and a tendency to mental depression unfitted him for any but the most congenial companions, and made him unduly sensitive to imaginary slights and neglects. The Rev. Royal Robbins gives a pleasing account of his manners and presence at this time : —

“ He is cold and diffident in his manners, yet steady in his feelings, frank and candid in the ex-
His manners and conversation. pression of his opinions, and particularly averse to display and noisy approbation, though keenly alive to the enjoyments to be derived from a delicate and considerate expression of public regard. His passion for study, and the reserve and even timidity of manner which characterizes him in mixed company, may naturally lead common observers to suppose that he has little aptitude for social intercourse and little delight in it. But

this opinion, if it be entertained by any, respecting the poet, is incorrect. He may never be known in mixed company in all the intellectual superiority which distinguishes him, yet in the free communications of intimacy few discover more ability or are more entertaining, and none less dogmatic or mystical. His range of topics extends to every department in morals, science, politics, history, taste, and literature. On points as to which he differs from others, he can be approached without the danger of offending even *his* strong sensibility. Arguments he seems to hear and weigh with much consideration, but his own opinions he maintains with great firmness; he is always ready and ingenious, and often convincing in his answers. He rarely ventures mere assertions, and few, perhaps, are more uniformly in the habit of maintaining their opinions by particular facts and strenuous and elaborate reasonings. One peculiarity may be observed in his manner of conversation, and that is, when he approaches a subject he enters deeply into it, views it on every side, and pursues it till it is exhausted, if it be exhaustible.

“Dr. Percival is a lover of rural walks and rural retirement; especially have the external objects ^{His fondness for outward} and scenery of his native parish thrilled his nature. bosom with delight, as well from their variegated beauty as from the associations of his childhood. In conversing of these rambles, however, the poet's remarks do not often turn on the beauties of nature, which are so apt to captivate a poetic mind. These beauties he has certainly felt exquisitely, but he reserves the expression of his feelings for the chosen hours of solitude, and gives them to the public in verse. His conversation more commonly assumes a scientific cast, and turns frequently upon botany,

mineralogy, geological appearances, and the phenomena of nature in general.”*

“His only fault in conversation, if fault it should be called, was that irrepressible communicative-
His fault in conversation. ness, so apt to result from long-continued and solitary study. The material of his conversation was rich and interesting knowledge, thought, and sentiment, — not idle words. Those who had the good fortune to obtain ready access to him were amply rewarded for their patience as listeners. His mind could easily be led to poetry and criticism, when his remarks would be delightfully genial and suggestive; but he seldom selected these topics himself. Indeed, his conversation generally followed the lead of others.”†

At this time there was a vacant professorship in Harvard University, which Percival desired. He
He seeks a professorship in Harvard University. went to Boston to see Professor Ticknor and others in regard to it; and he also wrote to his friend Dr. Gilman, who, though living in South Carolina, had much influence at Cambridge. This is Dr. Gilman’s reply:—

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

CAMBRIDGE, September 20, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Your letter reached me by a circuitous route, having
Letter from Dr. Gilman. first gone to Charleston, and then been sent on to this place. I was made to understand, on my arrival here, August 18, that you were in Boston. I immediately made every possible inquiry, going to several boarding-houses where I thought it likely you might re-

* Kettell’s Specimens of American Poets.

† Percival’s Poems, Vol. I. pp. xlviil., xlix.

main, and to the Boston Gazette office, which had announced your arrival in the city, and to Mr. Williams's house, and several other places, but in vain. At length, I understood that you had *evasit, erupit*,* etc., and I was disappointed in my intention of introducing you to my friends here, and showing you all the wonders of Commencement. With regard to the principal object of your letter, I am sorry to be obliged to say that it is the intention of the Corporation of Harvard College to distribute the duties of the late professorship among the other instructors of the institution, until the funds of the foundation accumulate to a given sum; Mr. Frisbie having been partly supported out of the general college treasury.

I have purchased and read with much pleasure your second Clio. I recommend it to everybody, though many have already gotten it. The sales have been considerable. I shall urge Everett to give a generous account of both numbers in the North American. Mr. Wells wishes me to state to you, that he (Wells and Lilly) is ready to republish your volume in an elegant way, and to share the profits. He has no doubt that it will sell very handsomely, and furnish you something substantial. Should the sales be promising, he engages to purchase your right to the profits by a round sum. Now I beg you to consent to this. The old edition is out of print. It will not cost you one cent to have a new one. Wells and Lilly will take all the hazard. If you wish to have nothing to do with it, pray give it into my hands. Would you be willing to let *me* reduce the dimensions? It is too copious for a dollar volume, printed as it ought to be. If my request to be the editor be too presumptuous, then I beg you to set about it. The republication will at all events

* Percival was in Boston in the spring of 1822.

do no harm. It will be a triumph to have a second edition called for; and a second edition is called for, by a bookseller being willing to publish it at his own risk. I am afraid no American bookseller will offer you a price. Pray have *certain passages* left out. It will conciliate many excellent readers. It will not subtract a particle from your independence. Come, stir up and comply with some of these requests.

Your choice of a place to live in and practise physic is just like you. You are an unfortunate wight. I do hope that some inspiration will give you a little worldly sense to balance the unrivalled measure of heavenly elasticity which makes you so much fitter for another world than this. Write immediately to

Your patient friend,

SAMUEL GILMAN.

Shortly before he left New Haven on his way to Charleston he made, through the family of His acquaintance with Mr. Yvonnet. Mr. Nathan Whiting, the acquaintance of Mr. Yvonnet. He had strong literary tastes and felt much sympathy with Percival; and when they parted they promised to keep up a correspondence, the first in which the poet ever engaged. A quotation has already been made from Mr. Yvonnet's first letter to Percival. He became a clergyman in the Episcopal Church, but died early. By the kindness of his brother,* I am able to give all the letters which the poet wrote to him. They are the confidential revelations of his feelings at a very critical period. In his first letter, dated "New York, Thursday, March 21, 1822," he says: "I have heard that you are engaged in delivering Lectures on Botany, a subject in

* Mr. Francis V. Yvonnet of Galesburg, Illinois.

which your poems evince that you take delight. I have read with pleasure your stanzas To the *Houstonia cerulea*. You read them to me, I think, ere you left New Haven. The stanzas commencing,

‘A tulip blossomed one morning in May,’

are excellent. But I am not a critic; therefore, I need not add anything more. Do you intend soon writing a large poem? ‘The world is full of poetry,’ you say; and you say *true*. May I be so inquisitive as to ask you concerning your future pursuits, whether you intend entering on the active duties of your profession, or remaining, as you have termed yourself, ‘a periodical poet.’ I am anxious that you should write to me immediately on the reception of this hasty epistle. Tell me how you are pleased with Charleston, whether there is much of a literary spirit among the citizens, and all those other particulars which you know will prove interesting to me. But remember to speak more particularly of *yourself* than of anything else.” With this last request it will be seen that he fully complied.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, June 11, 1822.

DEAR SIR, —

I received a letter from you directed to me at Charleston a few days since. It remained a long time in that office, and was then forwarded to me. You ^{Letter to Mr. Yvonnet.} must therefore excuse me for not answering you earlier. Besides, I am no correspondent. I never kept up a regular correspondence in my life. I shall therefore perhaps disappoint you before long. I returned here in April, and, like a fool, concluded to try authorship as a profession. I

therefore hired a pleasant little house to myself, just out of town. But I have found that I cannot live alone. With the exception of one or two young men, I have not the slightest vestige of society. In fact, I have nothing here to excite me. I am as completely without immediate motive as a snail in his shell. I am He is disgusted with authorship. utterly disgusted with authorship. I shall in the course of this month publish a second and last number of *Clio*, and then I am determined never to write another line of poetry. I shall then engage in my profession and in good earnest, and raise a battering-ram against error wherever I find it. I want something to act as a constant powerful excitement upon me, and I think if I can get a swarm around my ears I shall have something to keep me awake.

I know of no more contemptible being than an author who writes for money. He converts the only shrine where mind can find a sure asylum into a huckster's shop. He makes the last and best gift to man — language — the miserable means of supplying his miserable wants. If I must labor for subsistence, I will not labor with my pen, particularly when I am paid at a meaner rate than a shoeblack. I have succeeded in causing something of a stir in the papers at least, but the last echoes have died away, and now the whole of it appears puff, puff. I find myself as unnoticed as the most abject would desire to be. I shall leave here as soon as I have finished *Clio* and can get away.

Cities are truly the great and foul ulcers of society, but they are the only places where one like me Cities are good places for the unfortunate. can find his excitement or reward, and they are the best places for disappointed hope to die in, unnoticed and unknown. St. Pierre says cities are the

best refuge of the unfortunate, the place where they can best hide themselves. I once had something at stake in Philadelphia ; I think I shall renew my stake there and fight it out or die. I am sometimes lost when I think of the powerful influence of external excitement. I am a trunk without it.

Perhaps I do not say too much when I assert that I have gained more reputation as a poet than any American before me ; and after all, what is it ? Wretched illusion. They may talk of the pleasure of writing and musing and imagining. But were we made to be dreamers ? I have as comfortably despicable an opinion of the mass of men as heart could wish, but yet I do not like to give up the opinion that there are some gods and even angels among them ; but the charm of life is broken with me ; the veil that looks so beautiful around us has been torn in pieces ; and after all, I find the best of them are not much better than I am, and I am poor enough, heaven knows. Some are mad after books ; they study their health out and find it trash. Two or three clear turns of the eye will tell them as much as an age of mere reading ; and half of written knowledge is very good to keep children out of mischief, — most of the rest ought to be burnt up. I have added to the mountain of books and the myriad of authors. But I sometimes think I had better be annihilated, books and all, than be the means of making fools gape and girls cry as I perhaps may. There are religious madmen, — mad after heaven or mad with fear of hell, — and what a profitable thing it is to feel these hopes and cherish these fears. A young lady whom I once taught, and loved too, to whom I was so devoted that I am ashamed of it, and who, I am bold to

say, owes the best part of her mind to me, has lately, I understand, been engaged to a young Episcopal clergyman, — so the black coat ran away with beauty. They make the devotees; they connect the love of God with the love of themselves, worm themselves into the affections by a sort of religious courtship, and finally steal them away from those frank and open and high-toned spirits who disdain to offer anything but their own naked merit. After all, what a silly thing it is to regret a woman! — dear sensibility, oh, la! those sighs, and tears, and glances, and whispers, that cheek of roses, and bosom of heaped-up lilies, and eye of diamond, and breath like the perfume of Arabia, what nonsense and what stark lies, too, it begets at the pure effervescence of a heavenly spirit, and ends in — the straw! Why should young ladies be so anxious to [be married]? Every one wants a husband, and sets her cap for him as nicely as decency will allow, and sometimes more so. We call them, too, — angels, — but they are too heavy to fly. A little dress, and a little lisping and music and drawing, perhaps a blue stocking filled full of title-pages and technics. Is that unfair?

I am disgusted with all *prestiges*. The talk about liberty is abhorrent to me. I believe there is as much of general liberty here as elsewhere, and that our populace is as enlightened as any; and yet to see how they are yoked, and swayed, and pulled along by the nose, by boy demagogues, — really one would almost forswear his species. They make a great parade of liberty at the South, but it is nothing but the liberty of driving negroes and playing the fool with their earnings. And what was the liberty of Greece and Rome? An immense gang of slaves and a few self-styled republicans,

He describes
women.

Some re-
marks upon
liberty.

who flattered each other when they saw fit, and murdered each other when they had a mind to, — rich men who outbid each other at the auction of office and votes, which had each their petty price. I, like a thousand others, have talked big about these things, and yet they are, after all, *vox* ——. When a man has got a heap of dollars and a great house he has done something, and yet the getting is all the good about it. As for reading and study it serves to kill time, — a hard task. Talking answers for newspapers, because we can then measure existence by the exertion of mental power. I am very much inclined to think that one had better be lashed through life by a cat-o'-nine-tails than be a rich man at his ease.

I imagine, if you can read this letter, you will be, by this time, heartily tired of it. I assure you, I remember our slight acquaintance with no little satisfaction. ^{His health.} As for my health, it is not to be spoken of. It is a good maxim not to speak evil of the dead.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

J. L. YVONNET.

P. S.—I have a little leisure, and resume my bad pen. I fear I shall have to come under the influence of sad motives, i. e. I shall have to engage in the business of money-getting. For I will not starve; I will find a shorter outlet sooner. I wish I could find a circle of ^{He longs for congenial society.} society where I could have some motives to improvement, but I utterly despair. Everything around me now is humdrum or solitude. I cannot possibly endure this fruitlessness of effort. I shall make no more. They have destined me to a poetical immortality; but the immortality has ended, or it will begin only after I am dead. They call me retiring. They are determined I

shall be so. Well, I must bring myself up to an utter contempt of society, and try to find excitement in my own consciousness of a better fate, and in the society of men of undoubted excellence, whose company can always be found in their books, and that, too, without waiting for an invitation.

In his reply, Mr. Yvonnet gives a pleasant sketch of his reputation in New York : —

“I understand that your little piece, entitled The Carrier Pigeon, is sung at the theatre by Mrs. His reputation in New York. Holman, and received with great applause, it having been set to music by Moran. I heard a very fine young fellow do ample justice to the spirit and feeling of Retrospection, the other evening. He rehearsed it in a private circle with all the enthusiasm and fervor it is well calculated to excite ; and besides all, he is himself devoted to literary pursuits and passionately fond of poetry. Some of my friends, and especially those who may more properly be termed devotees to classical literature, are your greatest friends, though they know you only through the medium of your poems and the conversations we have had together. The question is often put to me, When do you intend visiting New York ? and several have told me that if I see you here, I must not fail to call with you to see them. . . . Your productions have, as you have noticed, commanded unprecedented attention, and your name is now passing through the whole Union with great *éclat*. Your effusions are looked upon as truly American, and are perused by all who make any pretensions to polite literature.”

He finds a rival in Irving.

His chief rival at this season was Irving, whose Bracebridge Hall divided the public attention with Percival's Clio and Prometheus.

About this time the events of the following story took place. He formed an attachment to a young ^{He meets} lady in New Haven, the orphaned daughter of ^{with a beautiful young} a sea-captain, who had great physical beauty. ^{lady.}

He carried books to her and read selections. She said of him, "I *do* wish Mr. Percival would n't bring these books to read. I don't like books, and don't want to read them." A friend told this to Percival, who then discontinued his visits. Not long after the young lady married a shoemaker and went to reside somewhere on the Hudson. It was of her that he wrote the poem beginning,

"She has no heart, but she is fair."

The third stanza conveys a fact very delicately and plaintively and bitterly:—

"She has no heart, she cannot love,
But she can kindle love in mine,—
Strange that the softness of a dove
Round such a thing of air can twine."

A certain family, whose son had become pleasantly acquainted with Percival at New Haven, invited him, during this summer, to visit them in their beautiful country home in a Connecticut village. They thought he was a poor but worthy young man, and that it would be both a great favor to the poet to give him a summer's residence, and a fine thing to have a minstrel, as in the olden time, in their family. Concerning this invitation, Percival said to a friend, indignantly, "Thank ^{He is not} God, I am not dependent upon others yet." ^{willing to} Their kindness was well meant, and the son ^{court the} was later a true friend to Percival, but they did not ^{wealthy} understand the sensitiveness of the poet. He was always particular about everything which related to his

own independence, either in respect of opinions or habits of life.

Mr. Yvonnét, in his reply to Percival's letter, says: "Write to me, my dear sir, with the same freedom which characterizes your first letter"; and he did.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, Wednesday, June 26, 1822.

DEAR SIR, —

I received your letter of the 24th this morning; and as
Letter to Mr. Yvonnét. I am a very poor correspondent, I will answer you immediately; otherwise I might never do it. I write very small, because I intend to put as much on my paper as I can. If you cannot read it in any other way, you must get a microscope. Not the New Haven Microscope; for although the editor of that glorious affair calls himself my foster-father in the Muses, and, amid the many insults which his well-meaning stupidity hangs upon me, declares that, had it not been for his clearing the way by inserting a few articles of mine in his great Miscellany, I never should have dared to face the public, I say, notwithstanding this, I hope my immortality is not tacked to such perishable stuff.

He feels neglected in New Haven. I am really ashamed to say anything of myself since my return here. I have been left entirely alone. There seems to be, in the better circles of New Haven, — if there are such, — a marked neglect, a studied determination not to know me. But although they cannot value me, they cannot destroy my reputation abroad. If I had good health, I could defy them, and live proudly alone; but I have suffered under constant ill-health since my return from the South, a great

degree of debility and depression. I imagine the Southern winter was no friend to my constitution. I think I shall not try it again. As it is, my health first sinks, then my spirits descend even to zero, and then thick-coming fancies and dreams of darkness gather around me, and I soon find myself in infernal company enough; and I have nowhere to go to drive them away. (I have two or three young men acquaintances in town, but none congenial.) I walk into the country, but my eye is then jaundiced to the beauties of nature. I go into town, and I am in a peopled solitude. I return home; books are but formal dulness, and my pen a bore. I often wish I could find a hole to creep out at. I begin to think that I have done all that I can do for my reputation, and that my future efforts will only impair it. I am then ready to say that I have given the world my passport to immortality, and if I have not yet done anything to keep alive my name, when I am dead and gone, I must go to the oblivion of the million without leaving even one representative to bear my name after me. I have been so long in solitude that I am almost afraid to emerge from it. I am almost afraid my mind has become so rusted that it cannot be oiled into easy motion. I begin to think there is a difference between P. the poet and P. the man, and that they never can be associated without injury to the former. I suppose the keen-scented New-Haveners have caught something about me which makes them think I am not worth notice. At any rate, it is rather unpleasant and dangerous for me to live in Nazareth, and one of the worst consequences is, it makes me imagine every place will be a Nazareth when I go there. But I cannot live a hermit any longer. If the

His loneliness and want of sympathy.

He begins to think P. the poet and P. the man are not the same.

world is everywhere determined to keep me aloof, I will no longer be of this world, not to spite them, but to defend myself.

Although in my former letter I shot a tirade against women, I am no misogynist; on the contrary, His acquaintance with women, and another view of them. I believe I have allowed my imagination to centre too fondly on them. I have tried to make of them the *sanctum sanctorum* of human nature, the angels that watch around us, and now and then open to us visions of something better than earth can give us. I recollect when I was a mere child I was strangely electrified by a little black eye. After that, for years, I knew absolutely nothing of them. I then became the teacher of a most amiable young lady for two years, and I have only had glimpses of their society since. I have seen them, and, like all distant objects, they have seemed more beautiful than the reality. The indistinctness with which they have appeared to me has left ample room for my imagination to work in, and I have thrown around them the greenest oases in the desert we have to travel over. But when I come nearer, I am constantly undeceived. I find the sheets of water only flitting vapors, and the verdure nothing but bitter senna (*vide* Bruce, W. Brown, etc.). I go too far. Women have still much that is lovely. They are kept out of the most contaminated moral atmosphere. They are left exposed to excesses and duplicity. They are obliged to assume (at least) a higher decorum, and there is ever an advantage in mere assumption. We are apt to become in reality what we pretend to be. They have naturally a greater delicacy of constitution, greater nervous susceptibility and tenderness of feeling. As they mingle less in the bustle of life, their sensibilities are less exposed to

be blunted, and their care of infancy and childhood is a constant school of their affections. Hence they are not as cold as men.

With your permission, I will proceed with this delicate subject. St. Pierre says, in his beautiful tale of *He quotes St. Pierre on marriage.*
La Chaumière Indienne, that the best thing in the world is a good wife. I have heard different opinions from married men. Some are not disposed to undervalue matrimony. They indeed speak of it as a homely sort of happiness compared with the bright visions of youth, but after all much better than single blessedness. I have heard others sneer at it and curse it. Either they or their wives were in the wrong, I believe, after all. St. Pierre was right, but the wife must be good and the husband too. Now, to speak seriously, it is time for me to marry, if I ever do. I am approaching the critical *His own views.*
period when the world can call me "old bachelor." I will make an effort to keep that title from me. I have never yet seriously set about it, and really I should make but green work of it. Men have different motives for marrying. Some marry a fortune, some a housewife, some a nurse, others a family interest, others an imaginary mistress. For my part, I will marry a woman whom I can love sincerely, if not enthusiastically, and in whom I can rationally bespeak an intellectual companion. I have been influenced by certain feelings on this subject which perhaps are not common. In nothing have I so much regretted my poverty and want of energetic occupation as in this, that it prevented me *His desire to marry.*
from giving an asylum to some one who had no other claims upon me but her merit and affection. I once saw a beautiful girl who seemed to me amiable and intelligent from her physiognomy, but who was in obvious risk of a

dangerous perversion. I tortured myself because I could not gain such an influence over her as to sway and form her mind and conduct, and because I could not give her those external advantages which she had a right to demand. Few would suppose me actuated by such motives; most would imagine that, like all the rest, I was only actuated by feelings of selfish libertinism: but the days of early youth are gone by, and possibly I shall be compelled to live and die single.

Perhaps you will think I am snivelling. If so, I stand reprovèd, and as Gibbie Girder says, What more can a man do than stand reprovèd? As for my poetical reputation, I am not now in the way of profiting by it. I have only the internal sense of self-satisfaction to reward me; for it gives me no introduction to any society that is better than an old college acquaintance. I imagine I have conversational powers. I know I can enjoy congenial society highly; and some of my efforts have been made under the influence of such excitement. It is not wonderful that I should be restless and unhappy in solitude. I am as little made for utter solitude as Poor Rousseau in the Hermitage, but I am condemned to it here; there is no escape; and if I do not in some of my fits of blue devils hang myself, I shall come off well. I believe I have become utterly insensible to the reputation I have attained abroad. My spirits are as vapid as an hour-old glass of soda-water. I shall never write anything more, unless I can find some new excitement, or health sufficiently buoyant to be an excitement unto myself. As I am now, I am plunged into double-distilled fogs of Bœotia. I wrote by particular request, the other morning before breakfast, two short hymns on the death of Fisher. I do not rest

His poetical
reputation
does not
bring money.

The vanity
of glory.

my reputation on them at all. At best, they are decent. They are all I have written this two months, and I have no inclination now to write another line, prose or measure. I cannot devise an aim for writing. If I am serious and wish to reform and improve my fellow-men, they will never heed it. The world will go on just as if I had never lived and written. If I seek literary fame and gain it, it is mere sound after all. I have gained some reputation. I have seen my name circulating widely in my native land, but at home I am just nothing. I do not see that my situation is at all improved by it; and, what is worse, I have no prospect, unless I change my residence, and then I run after uncertainties. I think it hardly safe for the flesh and blood of an author to accompany his works.

No man is a hero, they might say every man is a fool, to his *valet de chambre*. You may perhaps think me a spiritless fellow. I have not spirits enough to act without motive. I have neither health nor external excitement, and who can act without these? What would you think, if you had only the society of a few indolent dyspeptic tutors, a young lawyer without ambition, and the illiterate mistress of a boarding-house? ^{His society and his feelings.}

Would the distant and dying murmurs of newspaper applause and the remembrance of a few flattering attentions a thousand miles off lift you against the depression of ill-health and solitude, and give brightness to the prospect of lowliness, obscurity, and poverty? Absolutely, I shall die unless I leave New Haven. I will go somewhere, where I can be daily stirred into activity, or I will sell off all my books and travel for my life. I once travelled on foot to Niagara and returned. I have some inclination to follow the example of Walking Stew-

art, and see how far my feet can carry me. But enough of this.

You have discussed the question whether religion forbids the love of glory. This depends on what we call glory. If we mean by it courage enough to fight a duel, or the fame and splendor of a conqueror or tyrant, not only religion, but common sense, forbids it. But if we mean by it the highest cultivation and the brightest efforts of our intellectual powers, the energetic, the generous and disinterested exertion of our faculties in elevating the human character and giving a new elegance and polish and dignity and firmness to society, the strong, unwearied endeavor to stem the torrent of corruption in every shape, then I say, cursed be the religion that denounces the love of glory. My God! when I think of this, I cannot but kindle. Would that I could find a society that could partake in all the emotions that I sometimes feel, could at once set down their foot on everything low and trifling, could throw around those bright visions of glory that appeared so dazzling to the great souls of antiquity, could unite their efforts in some grand aim of improvement, and, forgetting all private advantage, could spurn as base, everything that had not for its object their own essential exaltation and the general purification of the moral atmosphere! But I cannot sustain it myself, and I find none who have any notion of it. Give me a little more salary, a few more subscribers, a little more custom, a good dinner, a soft bed, a stylish coat, a little silly chit-chat with the ladies,—and all is well. I have heard *les religieux à Calvin* boast of the Christian precept of humility. Humility, with proper qualifications, is very well. But the only safe spring of action is a just sense

of personal dignity. Well-tempered pride is the best feeling of our nature. It is as far from vanity as the antipodes. The one concentrates our powers and collects us in our own strength like a colossus. The other dissipates itself in catching the gaze of others, and throws out its seducing tricks like the flimsy threads of the venomous spiders. A truly proud man never will be mean. A vain man is essentially mean. A proud man moves through life erect in his own worth. He is like a stately ship, lifting its broad sails before a fair wind, and steadily ploughing its way to its destined haven, or stemming unwrecked and unbroken the adverse tempest. The vain man creeps and flutters,—now a caterpillar in the dirt, and then a painted moth humming around the light to show off his own prettiness, burning himself in a flame too intense for his puny being, and finally dying in the stench of his own worthlessness. A truce to this rhodomontade! I am writing a letter, and letters should never be on stilts. I will wind up when I have told you that this afternoon they render all due honor to the memory of Professor Fisher, and that I shall ever be happy to receive your communications.

Your sincere friend and obedient servant,

J. G. PERCIVAL.

The moody despondency which runs through these letters weighed heavily upon him.

Dr. Underwood, another of his correspondents, writes under date Philadelphia, August 16, 1822: Extract from Dr. Underwood's letter.
“I am sorry to find in your last letter the same sombre complexion pervading all your anticipations. If you will have no confidence in yourself, how

can you expect others to repose it in you? I think you do injustice to your friends, who, I doubt not, would forward your views to the extent of their abilities." In the same letter he made allusion to Percival's intention of visiting Europe, — a part of the world he was destined never to see.





CHAPTER VIII.

1822.

PUBLISHES CLIO No. II. — REVIEWED BY DR. GILMAN. — WRITES PROMETHEUS, PART II. — CRITICISMS UPON IT. — RECOLLECTIONS BY PROFESSOR FOWLER. — HIS PHI BETA KAPPA ORATION.



ONE of his first labors, when he got settled, was the preparation for the second number of *Clio*. The materials had now accumulated upon his hands, — his contributions to the *Courier* and the poems written on the voyage home, — so that the “periodical poet” could venture again before the public. This he did in August, 1822, with the second number of *Clio*. The title-page bore a motto from Boileau : —

He publishes
the second
number of
Clio.

“ Qui ne sait se borner, ne sut jamais écrire.”

It was published by his friend, Mr. S. Converse of New Haven, and contained 132 pages. Save the Preface, which is mainly an essay upon the nature and uses of poetry, it was made up of poetry alone. These were his views upon the publication of this slender volume : —

“ When I gave the first number of *Clio* to the public, I did not pledge myself to issue a second, but I have allowed a sufficient quantity of passing effusions to accumulate upon me to induce me to publish this second and *positively* last number. I do not feel myself called upon to detail my reasons for abandoning this

Extract from
his Preface.

undertaking. It is not worth while to answer before questioned. Others may not feel such an interest in the continuance of this work as to demand the causes of its termination, and I really do not wish to draw out my own private feelings from the retirement of my bosom. Henceforth no collection of fugitive pieces shall appear under my name. If it is again obtruded on the public, it shall be in a work of a regular, extended, and matured plan.

“In the former Preface I offered a few observations on the nature and uses of poetry. I shall now continue them, not as specimens of critical disquisitions, but as simple expressions of my own views and feelings. There has lately been an interesting controversy on this subject; and even now, the lovers of poetry and pretenders to taste are arranged under different standards. Some dwell on the rich fancy, the deep feeling, the strong passion, and the vivid imagery of the early school of the days of Elizabeth. They readily pardon their negligence and occasional coarseness, their contempt of all the rules of rhetoric, and the improbabilities of their fictions, for the deep and rich vein that shines through them. Others take Pope and Campbell for their standards. The smoothness of their versification, the perfect correctness and propriety of their language, the fastidiousness of their taste, and their regular chime of thought and measure, constitute with this class of amateurs the *ne plus ultra* of poetic excellence. Of these two classes, I confess myself most attached to the former.”

This number contained the best poetry he had yet written. It was the most cheerful and sunny. It reflected the geniality of his Southern home and his Southern friends. Its circulation, however, was limited. Dr. Samuel Gilman said at the time that it

His further
views of
poetry.

Character
of the vol-
ume.

“contains some of the best poetry that has yet been sung by ‘degenerate Americans.’” He was one who could truly appreciate Percival, and his review of the two numbers of *Clio* in the *North American* for January, 1823, betrays a friendly yet critical hand, as a few extracts will show : —

“The most formidable obstacle to Mr. Percival’s general popularity is the same, we apprehend, Extracts from Dr. Gilman’s review. which prevents the multiplication of editions of Southey and Wordsworth ; we mean, a disinclination in those authors to consult the precise intellectual tone and spirit of the average mass to whom their works are presented. Theirs is the poetry of soliloquy. They write apart from and above the world. Their original object seems to be the employment of their faculties and the gratification of their poetical propensities ; after which the world is indulged with the favor of listening to the strains that have charmed and soothed their own solitude. A few congenial souls, indeed, will always be found to sympathize with such effusions, and none may be inclined to question the genius from which they proceed ; and sometimes, as is frequently the case with the present author, the inclinations of the poet himself may coincide with the general taste by a happy chance, and thus produce compositions which deserve immediate, extensive, and permanent popularity. . . .

“There certainly reigns in many parts of it [his poetry] the true ethereal spirit. The vein is The spirit of his poetry. often as fine as any we have ever known. The pieces are not few in which the soul of the author, rising as he proceeds, involves itself and the reader in a cloud of delicious enchantment. He possesses the rare and divine art of imparting to language those mysterious

and unearthly influences which come to us from the strings of an Æolian harp. Without employing our senses as instruments, he can yet diffuse through our feelings something like the result of all the sweetest sensations. Other authors may obtain admiration and fame from the excellence and beauty of separate ideas and sentiments, and the skill with which they arrange them. These gifts are enough to make the fine writer; they may produce the deepest immediate impressions. But to these Mr. Percival adds the power of exciting in the mind a pervading and continuing charm; an aggregate effect, separate from the original one, analogous to a secondary rainbow. As you wander through the garden of his poetry, you enjoy something more than the pleasure of gazing on individual specimens, or inhaling their successive sweets, or surveying gay beds and fairly ordered pastures; for the air itself is occupied with a spirit of mingled fragrance. As mere music often speaks a sort of language, so our author's language breathes a sort of music. We are convinced that it is true poetry, since in reading it we have had exactly the same feeling as in surveying admired subjects in the sister arts of painting and statuary.

“To descend, however, to praises a little more particular and discriminating, the author's wide command of the English language deserves honorable notice. His rhymes are unhackneyed, yet always very natural. He has scarcely a trick of the mere versifier. We meet with few inversions of the common order of syntax. He has drunk deeply of the best undefiled springs.

“We are next pleased with his intimate familiarity with classical literature. It is evidently of a kind not borrowed

from Lempriere. It generally appears in incidental allusions, which are rather forced upon him from a well-stored memory than sought after for the purpose of display. It is doubly refreshing to meet with this property in our author, both as it furnishes a proof that the race of ripe classical scholars is flourishing among us, and also that the stock of classical images and ornaments is far from being exhausted. We are persuaded, moreover, that Mr. Percival has caught from the study of Greek models a certain Attic purity and severity of style, conspicuous in some of his best wrought pieces.

“ Besides this quality, we also observe, in every part of these volumes, proofs of very extensive and profound general knowledge. There is almost an encyclopedic familiarity with subjects in many departments of modern science. It is this ample store of images and illustrations, joined with his happy art of introducing them, which gives us confidence in the ultimate splendid success of Mr. Percival’s authorship. . . . We regard his powers and resources as inexhaustible; and if his spirit shall be elastic enough to try them all successively, condescending at the same time to feel and be guided by the pulse of public taste, (we do not mean merely the public of to-day,) he will acquire for the literature of his country an enviable renown.

“ Another peculiarity in these pages which strikes us agreeably is the felicitous art of weaving into the texture of a composition the names of common and vulgar objects, which a poet of ordinary powers would despair of introducing with success. Mr. Percival overcomes in a moment the repulsive or unpoetical associations attached to such words, and invests them with an unwonted dignity and purity.”

His familiarity with classical literature.

His extensive knowledge.

He makes the names of common objects poetical.

Soon after this he was engaged on the second part of His Phi Beta Kappa oration. Prometheus as a Phi Beta Kappa poem ; but becoming discouraged, at his own request the appointment was changed to an oration, which he delivered before the society September 10, 1822. His subject was "On some of the Moral and Political Truths derivable from the Study of History." * When he had written it, he came to read it to Dr. Ives, who had previously cautioned Percival against reading too fast, and without articulating his words, as was his custom. He began his oration, but was soon reading so fast that the Doctor could not understand him. He told him so, and asked him to begin again, which he did ; but in a minute he was running sentences into each other again, after the old habit. The Doctor then corrected him, but he became angry and left the house. In delivering the oration, he proceeded only part way and then stopped. It was a sketch of the causes which led to the downfall of ancient Rome, and a just and discriminating examination of the dangers to be apprehended by us from somewhat similar causes. Percival, like Irving, had no aptness for the display of popular eloquence.

The second part of Prometheus was published by A. H. Maltby, at New Haven, in November, 1822. He publishes Prometheus, Part II. It had been begun already, but was chiefly written immediately before publication. It made a neat little *brochure* of 108 pages, 18mo ; and the edition consisted of one thousand copies. They sold well, and there was increased demand for Part First. In the Preface he modestly says : "It was written hastily in a very few days. This is no apology, if it is bad ; if it is good, it needs none." This now completed his longest and most elaborate poetical work.

* Appendix B.

It was of this poem that the poet Whittier wrote so appreciatively in 1830, in the New England The poet Whittier's Weekly Review, of which he was then the opinion of it. editor : —

“ God pity the man who does not love the poetry of Percival ! He is a genius of Nature’s making, — that singular and high-minded poet. He has written much that will live while the pure and beautiful and glorious, in poetry and romance, are cherished among us. His aim has always been lofty, — up, up, into a clearer sky and a holier sunshine ; and if he has failed at all, he has failed in warring with the thunder-cloud, and crossing the path of the live lightning. His Prometheus is a noble poem. There is no affectedness about it, — all is grand and darkly majestic. It has few soft and delicate passages, — no tinge of the common love-poetry of the day, — no breathings of vows to ‘ rose-lipped angels in petticoats,’ — no dalliance with a ‘ lady’s curls.’ He left *such* things to the dandies in literature, — to our love-sick and moon-struck race of rhymers, — and went forth in the dignity and power of a man, to grapple with the dark thoughts which thronged before him, moulding them into visible and tangible realities.

“ The apostrophe to the sun, in this poem, we have ever looked upon as the most magnificent specimen of American poetry within our knowledge. The following stanza is of unrivalled excellence : —

Thine are the mountains, where they purely lift
Snows that have never wasted, in a sky
Which hath no stain ; below the storm may drift
Its darkness, and the thunder-gust roar by,
Aloft in thy eternal smile they lie
Dazzling but cold ; thy farewell glance looks there,
And when below thy hues of beauty die,

Girt round them as a rosy belt, they bear
 Into the high, dark vault a brow that still is fair.'

"The American Monthly Magazine, in a fine notice of Percival, hints that he is forgotten by the public. It is not so. In every village of our country, where the light of literature has penetrated, the name of Percival is familiar, and the beautiful language of his poetry is breathed from the soft, rich voice of woman, and upon the bearded lip of manhood."

A writer in the second volume of the New England Magazine for 1832 was less pleased. He says:—

"Here is the raw material, if we may so say, of a fine poem, — abundance of images, no lack of ideas, a copious poetical vocabulary, and single stanzas of great splendor and beauty; but it is wrought up in defiance, it would almost seem, of the natural laws of association and the common rules of composition. It is deficient in that crowning merit of interest, without which all others are as nothing. It requires a vigorous moral effort to read it. Earth, air, and sea, the past and the present, the world of sense and the world of thought, are ransacked for images which have no relation to each other but that of juxtaposition. It reminds us of a beautiful landscape covered over with a thick fog. We wait impatiently for the veil to roll away, and strain our eyes to catch a glimpse of the fields, the woods, the habitations, of men, the glittering spires of churches, — but in vain; we cannot get even a frame to hold the picture which our own imagination would create. Another of his long poems, the Wreck, is much better. Here is a story, as slight and simple as anything can well be, but still a connected narrative. . . . But neither of them are to be compared with some of his fugitive pieces. We ven-

Another
 opinion.

ture to say that there are as many people that know by heart his *Consumption* and *Coral Grove* as have read through either of the others."

Another portion of the same review is more kind: —

"There has always been a charm to us in Mr. Percival's poetry, from its appearing to be so much the natural expression of his thoughts. His mind seems to exhale poetry as flowers do their fragrance. He puts his soul into every line. He seems to love and venerate his noble art, and prefers the very sorrows that it creates to pleasures derived from any other source. He does not write poetry to gain wealth, to attract attention, or to escape from the tyranny of unhappy thoughts, but because he is a poet and cannot help it. Hence, notwithstanding the variety of his productions, they are all imbued with the same spirit. There is no wit, no humor, no satire, no stern, Crabbe-like observation of men and things. The beauty-giving light of poetry hangs over everything. Many of his best poems are those upon Greece, either suggested by recollections of her glory when she was in her 'palmy state,' when her heroes were as numerous as her men and her history was poetry put into action, or inspired by the enthusiasm awakened by her recent struggles. It is not enough to say of these productions that they glow with the fire of Pindar and Æschylus; they show the author's heart-felt admiration of what he commemorates, and his deep sympathy with oppressed men struggling to be free."

I am indebted for the following recollections, giving some graphic sketches of Percival through several years, to Professor William C. Fowler, his life-long friend, and one who, at this time, with liter-

Recollections
by Professor
W.C. Fowler.

ary tastes and sympathies congenial with his own, was of peculiar service to him.

TO THE EDITOR.

DURHAM, CONN., January 15, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR, —

I cannot with propriety refuse your request, that I would furnish you with some reminiscences of my old friend, James Gates Percival. Friendship has its duties which on this occasion I will cheerfully endeavor to perform.

In the year 1858 I was urged by Dr. Erasmus North to write a biographical sketch of him to be prefixed to a forthcoming edition of his works.

Reference to Dr. North's intended memoir. This edition, which the Doctor had commenced, he also requested me to complete and superintend while in the press. From ill-health he felt unable to perform what he wished to do for his friend and mine. In an interview and in my correspondence with him I encouraged him to go on with his work, already begun, instead of transferring it to me. He died not long after, not having completed what he had generously attempted. If there was any lack of service on my part, on that occasion, there must not be on this.

In June, 1813, when a Freshman in Yale College, I saw Percival, then a Sophomore, for the first time. He was in the College Chapel, standing up and facing me in the seat next forward, while Dr. Dwight was leading the devotions of the assembled students. His classical features, his blonde complexion, his large humid eyes, with dilated pupils, the tear starting and then setting back into its

Percival in college.

First glimpse of Percival.

well in the socket, his whole expression as of one who had no communion with those around him, attracted my notice and led me to inquire his name and character. Was that sensibility, were those starting tears, the external manifestation of the workings of his own mind, or rather of the strong passive impression produced by the speaker's grand and musical voice, with which he intoned his prayer? Were those "looks communing with the skies, his rapt soul sitting in his eyes," or with earth?

He stood in the first rank as a scholar. Grouped with Eccles, and Clayton, and Marshall, and Hooker, ^{His position} and other leading men of his class, he stands in ^{in his class.} my memory, as if on canvas, the prominent figure. His reputation extended from the college to Berlin, his native place. The wife of the minister of a parish there, Mrs. Elizabeth Goodrich, informed me that Dr. Dwight had declared to herself or some one that Berlin had sent to Yale College a "great genius in the person of Percival."

Deficiencies and peculiarities of mind and manners he had, which threw him out of harmony with the ^{Not in sym-} masses, and which gave some doubt as to his ^{pathy with} future usefulness and success in life. He was ^{his class-} ^{mates.} not in sympathy with his fellow-students, nor were they in sympathy with him. He had his own sources of inspiration, which he sought in solitude and silence. The electric current of his genius was flowing upon his soul as upon a prime conductor. Will that soul always be insulated? So various were his susceptibilities of impression from the several classes of objects in nature and art and science, and so various were his attainments, that one could believe that, in his solitude, each of the nine

bright-eyed daughters of Memory had in turn looked into his face and breathed inspiration into his soul. Will he, like Numa, after communing with the fabled nymph Egeria, come forth to enlighten and bless mankind?

He entered college in 1810, but for some reason, perhaps because he did not feel himself to be in harmony with his classmates, — some of whom were brusk and boyish in their conversation with him and about him, — he left that class and came into the succeeding one. In this he was more highly appreciated, perhaps because he was better known. But on one occasion he gave offence to certain members of his class by a satirical poem, in which they were exhibited under ludicrous associations. It was written at the annual Thanksgiving, and described some scenes in the dining-hall which were common on such occasions. The descriptions were too truthful to be satisfactory to the actors.

Better appreciated in his new class.

At the junior exhibition of my class, I delivered an oration on "Cultivating a Talent for Poetry." Whether he heard in that oration the echoes of the questionings of his own soul, or responses to those questionings, he after that always fixed upon me an earnest, tender look, as he hurried past me on the college ground, but only with the slightest recognition on his part or mine. My familiar acquaintance grew out of an accidental interview with him in 1818, on his return from the South, where he had been employed as a teacher. I was at that time Preceptor of the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven. He felt some sympathy with me in my employment, and the first part of our conversation was upon the science and art and usefulness of teaching. We then spent perhaps an hour in

He is attracted to Professor Fowler.

A more familiar acquaintance.

talking upon the poet Burns, upon his genius and his follies, narrating anecdotes concerning him, and repeating his poetry. I remember well with what pathos he recited "A Bard's Epitaph," which he evidently applied subjectively, especially the stanza,

"Is there a man whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
But runs himself life's mad career
Wild as the wave?
Approach, and through the starting tear
Survey this grave."

After this interview, he was at my room frequently, always ready to converse freely and unreservedly upon the true, the good, and the beautiful, ready to expatiate with the great naturalist, Linnæus, over the wide earth, or to ascend with Newton to the visible heavens, or to soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere "to the first good, first perfect, and first fair."

I was at that time boarding in College Street, at Mrs. Johnson's, in company with Mr. Ingersoll, who with me was studying theology, and with Mr. Webb, who, with another boarder, was studying medicine. Percival, who had entered the Medical School, proposed to me to take a seat at the same table. He was cordially welcomed to our mess. For two or three weeks after he joined us he was uniformly taciturn, taking no part in the conversation, which was frequently addressed to him to draw him out. But one day at dinner, Mr. Ingersoll made some remark upon a characteristic feature of the Red Sea and the adjacent region. Percival immediately took up the subject in its relation to geology, climate, wars, political changes, language, literature, and religion, and treated it with an exactness of

The shy
student
becomes
talkative.

statement, an affluence of illustration, and a felicity of language that enchained our attention, as he fluently poured out, for perhaps half an hour, sentence after sentence. When Mr. Ingersoll courteously invited him to continue the conversation after we should have returned thanks, he shrank forthwith into himself and never could be drawn out again.

In 1820, Mr. Cornelius Tuthill, with the aid of two other friends of mine, Mr. Henry E. Dwight and Mr. Nathaniel Chauncey, conducted a literary semi-weekly paper entitled "The Microscope."

He becomes
a contributor
to the Micro-
scope.

On my suggesting to Mr. Tuthill that Percival might be persuaded to offer some poetical contributions, he requested me to make application for that purpose. On my applying to him, he answered me that he had never published a line of poetry, that he felt some diffidence with respect to his poetical powers, though he confessed to some curiosity to see himself in print. In short, he was as modest and as coy as a young maiden. He finally yielded to my wishes on two conditions, namely, that I should examine, previous to their insertion, all his productions for the purpose of correction, and that their authorship should be kept a profound secret, until he should be willing to have it disclosed. When he brought me his first poem, commencing,

"His glance was fixed on power alone,"

he still shrank from exposing it to the public eye, but was persuaded to commit it to me for publication. The reception of this and other poems of his in that periodical so well satisfied him, that, upon advice and encouragement, he proceeded to prepare a volume of poetry for publication.

While thus engaged, he was almost every day at my room in the college, where I was a tutor, to show me

what he had written or revised the day or morning before, always ready to accept a criticism on the language and rhythm, and prompt at making the correction suggested; but almost always reluctant to change the sentiment, especially if it was of a religious or moral character.

"I ask no pity, nor will I incline
Weakly before the cross, nor in the blood
Of others wash away my crimes."

To this infidel resolution in Prometheus I objected, that if he adopted it as his own, it would excite sorrow in the breast of all his Christian friends; and if he did not adopt it, but put it into the mouth of an imaginary personage, he would still, in the mind of some of his readers, render himself obnoxious to the suspicion of adopting it, and thus expose himself unnecessarily to the *odium theologicum*. All my arguments were ineffectual. The passage now stands as originally written, affording, as was supposed by many at the time of its publication, sufficient ground for the suspicion. The reason he alleged for his persistence was, that a poet should not be held responsible for either logical or illogical inferences against him, drawn from his wayward or transient fancies, and that he could use poetically unchristian sentiments or pagan mythology without subjecting himself to the charge of adopting either.

He composed very rapidly and under the highest mental excitement.* On one occasion he read to me, before the college recitation at eleven o'clock, seventeen stanzas of nine lines each, composed that very

He brings his poetry to Mr. Fowler.

Mr. Fowler tries to induce him to leave out certain portions, but does not succeed.

His habit of composition.

* This is confirmed by all his friends. He used to bite his finger nails while writing.

morning. He often came to my room to show me what he had just written, while the afflatus was upon him, while the *mens divinator* was in play, as if in the act of creation, while his face shone as if he had just come down from the sacred mount, flushed by an interview with the mythological immortals. The readiness and continuity of his poetic associations were marvellous. In his poem entitled "Maria," there are seventy-eight lines of continuous poetic association without a period. The next sentence has in it thirty-nine lines. Percival was not in the habit of improving his writings by revision. On my mentioning the numberless corrections made by Pope, and also his remark that he took as much pleasure in correcting as he did in writing, and also the remark of Bacon, or some one, that all new creations are like cubs, Does not like which the parent bear must lick into shape, the labor he replied, after musing for a time, "Minerva sprang from the brain of Jupiter, a finished goddess at her birth."

The period, reaching from the time when he commenced publishing in the *Microscope*, in 1820, to the time when he attained his appointment at West Point in 1824, was probably the happiest portion of his life.* By means of his first volume entitled "Poems," published in 1821, he was brought into communication with the human world, in which he had long lived as in a wilderness. By this communion he felt his soul invigorated into a livelier sympathy with others, as they took an interest in him, so that his higher hopes and purposes were strengthened beyond what they had ever been in his hermit state. In this period he also published

* In some respects this was true, yet the touching confessions in his letters give a different version to the story.

the First and Second Parts of Clio, and the Second Part of Prometheus, and also an octavo volume containing selections from his works. These publications were praised by reviewers, who bore flattering testimony to the large capacities of his genius for future efforts. About this time selections from his works were published in London. The students of the colleges and the literary men generally hailed him as a rising star in the literary firmament. Sweet voices warbled his numbers, sweet lips ^{A lion in} recited them and breathed forth his praises; ^{those days.} and as he walked the streets a "cold shy poet," the "observed of all observers," with self-application he could repeat the line,

"At pulchrum est digito monstrari et dicier 'Ille est.'"

At this time, too, he was contemplating what was to be the great poem of his life, in four parts, entitled ^{His plan of} "MAN." In the First Part, he would treat of ^{an elaborate} ^{poem.} the *actual perfection* of man; in the Second, of the *probable perfection* of man; in the Third, of the *possible perfection* of man; in the Fourth, of the *imaginable perfection* of man. He expressed to me his hopes that he might enjoy from the sale of his works so much pecuniary independence that he would be able to write this work, the details of which he described to me with great particularity. And in the vista of the future, which his genius was beginning to open to him through the wilderness, he could see hovering the forms of domestic bliss. Could some one at this time have taken him up to place him in a permanent home, supplied his simple ^{His need of} wants, and have been to him what the ^{a Mæcenæ.} Thræles were to Johnson, and the Unwins were to Cowper, and Guy Mannering was to Dominie Sampson, and Guy

Darrell was to Hawthorne, the history of his life might have been the reverse of what it was. Are such instances of benevolence in social life confined to England? Will they ever be found in our own country?

Percival uttered sceptical language in his poetry, which gave pain to his Christian friends. But he also used language which recognized the truths of the Christian religion; he used the expressions related to Christianity just as another would use expressions borrowed from classical mythology, as a poet only, for the purpose of illustration or impression. He was not indif-
Percival not hostile to religion. ferent to the Christian religion, as a system of doctrines, or as an inner life in the souls of men, or as an outward manifestation in their actions, or as expressed in the forms of worship. In the sermons of Professor Fitch, then in the flower of his popularity, he appreciated the logical analysis of the doctrines, the felicitous language, and the occasional bursts of eloquence. In the sermons of Dr. Taylor, he appreciated the powerful appeals to the conscience and the fears, when the preacher was moving along his burning track into direct collision of his strong will with the sinner's will. And even in the sermons of young preachers of his acquaintance he found something to interest him.

Percival was examined for the degree of M. D. in 1820. The examination was prolonged, not for the purpose of satisfying the examiners of his qualifications, but for the purpose of beholding his treasured stores of medical knowledge. He attempted to reduce his
His failure in Berlin. science to practice in Berlin, among the patrons of his father, a physician. After staying there a few months, he made out his bills for collection. One man criticised his bill so sharply that Percival in disgust

destroyed all the rest of them, and came off to New Haven.

He spent a part or all of a winter in Charleston, S. C., with some purpose of establishing himself there ^{In Charles-} in his profession. There he wrote and published ^{ton.} his beautiful poem, commencing,

“ Flower in a Southern garden newly blowing,”

and some other poems, which were much admired by the appreciative and highly cultivated people with ^{His Southern} whom he had intercourse there. When he re- ^{home and its} turned to New Haven in the spring, the ice ^{influence} upon him. seemed to have been melted out of him in that genial climate. He himself became in a good degree genial and confiding. Not long after he was, by universal consent, placed *inter amabiles vatum choras*, and in the estimation of some as the *coryphæus* of American bards. His acquaintance was sought by many who had passed him by with indifference. It was his good fortune to make the acquaintance of a circle of intelli- ^{He is kindly} gent and refined ladies in New Haven, who ^{received} had by his works been attracted to their au- ^{in New} thor. In them he found qualities which had hitherto, in his experience, existed only in his ideal of female excellence. They could charm from their lurking-places in his soul into distinct manifestation those forms of thought and sentiment which he had hitherto cherished in solitude. In them he could find a counterpart or complement of himself. They, from their habitual consciousness, could understand and admire in him refinements of character which coarser and more robust minds would fail to appreciate. With them he talked upon æsthetics, whether in their application to nature or moral sentiment

or human conduct ; or he strolled with them occasionally in the fields, surveying such objects on the earth or in the sky as would interest a naturalist or a poet.

“How happily the days of Thalaba went by!”

As an expression of his own feelings or as a picture for others to look at, or as mementos of the partners of his social enjoyments in those talks and walks, he composed his very beautiful poem entitled “Mental Harmony.” If I remember right, he told me that another fine piece, entitled “Mental Beauty,” bore some relation to the same social intercourse with those ladies.

In 1821 he made a pedestrian tour to Niagara to behold that “stupendous miracle of Nature.” On his return he narrated to me his adventures in his tour. He arrived at a country town on the Canada side, within hearing of the cataract, about nightfall. He retired to rest, and lay broad awake under the influence of the dreamy sound of the falling waters. As he could not sleep, he rose while it was yet night and hastened forward that he might see the Falls at the first full light of the next day. As he pressed onward, his walk, at first moderate, became faster and then faster, until it was changed into an Indian trot, and this into a full run, in which he exerted his limbs to their utmost power. He arrived at the Falls at his highest speed, out of breath, panting, looked for a moment, and turned away in bitter disappointment. He went to the hotel, took breakfast, read the newspapers, and concluded to leave after dinner. Before dining, he took a stroll which brought him to the Falls, which aroused an interest not felt in the morning. This interest grew upon him until the excitement in his mind

A visit to
Niagara.

rose to an overpowering emotion of sublimity which chained him to the place for some days.

In practical life, Dr. Percival often found himself disappointed in not being able to realize his ideal.

Much to his gratification, he was appointed to deliver the annual poem before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1822. After writing a considerable portion of this poem, he very earnestly said to me "that the society had made a great mistake in appointing him to deliver a poem, when prose was his forte." Having had something to do with his appointment, I felt a little disturbed by this declaration. I urged him strenuously and repeatedly to go on and fulfil his obligations, telling him, for his encouragement, that if he would deliver the poem this year, he might be appointed to deliver the oration next year. But he could not be persuaded to go on with his poem. At his request, therefore, his appointment was changed to an oration, which he wrote and delivered. It was afterwards printed, and well spoken of by his friends. The poem, if memory serves me, was the Second Part of Prometheus, and was delivered before one of the college societies.

I shall now break up Professor Fowler's excellent communication into several parts, one of which will be given in the following chapter, in order to fit it more easily into my narrative.





CHAPTER IX.

1822, 1823.

PUBLICATION OF HIS SELECTED WORKS. — CRITICISED IN THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR. — THINKS OF TAKING HOLY ORDERS. — LETTER FROM FITZ-GREENE HALLECK. — TROUBLE WITH A PUBLISHER. — BECOMES AN EDITOR.



Paucity of cultivated people in the United States forty years ago.

A literary circle in New York.

THOUGH Percival was at this time very popular with the more cultivated classes, the majority of the American people still preferred the drum and the trumpet to a finer music. Genius was not yet recognized broadly in the different grades of society. This did not damp his literary enthusiasm. No sooner had he seen *Prometheus*, Part II., well into the publisher's hands, than he turned his attention to a select republication of his poetical works, and soon went to New York to consult in regard to it with Mr. Stone, the journalist, and with Mr. Arthur Bronson, who was interested in Percival, and situated in a way to render him material service. Mr. Charles Wiley was then one of the chief literary magnates of New York. In the rear of his store the choice *litterateurs* of the day had a sort of club-room, where they often met for the interchange of literary and social life. Here Cooper and Bryant and Stone and Goodrich were often seen; and here they suggested to Wiley the publication of Perci-

val's poetry in a form befitting such brilliant productions. To this Wiley consented, and they at once drew up a contract. The volume was to be an octavo, of about four hundred pages, published "in a style equal to the Sketch-Book in all respects," to be bound in boards, and to sell for three dollars per volume. Wiley was to take the expense and risk of the edition when two hundred good subscriptions had been obtained. ^{A selected volume of his poems to be published.} He was also to advance to Percival sixty dollars, which was to be refunded out of the first actual avails of the work, but, in case Wiley violated the contract, was not to be refunded at all. The edition was to be one of seven hundred and fifty copies. Wiley engaged a room for Percival, and he was to remain in town while the work was passing through the press.

While these negotiations were pending in New York, Percival received a kind word of cheer from the late Professor Goodrich, a man whose work as an instructor of youth was not less important than his own numerous contributions to literature : —

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

YALE COLLEGE, November 30, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR, —

Permit me to return my acknowledgments for the high gratification which I have found in reading your late sketch of the maid watching over the pil-
^{Letter from Professor Goodrich.}
low of her dying lover.* There is in that piece a deli-

* The poem here referred to is the one entitled "Night Watching." He was requested by several others to insert it in this volume. It was published in a Virginia paper in February, 1823, with the following preface, explaining it : —

"The lines which follow, from the pen of Mr. Percival, an American poet, seem to have been composed with a distinct allusion to the awful

cacy, richness, and pathos which would give your name to distant ages as a genuine poet, were it the only production of your pen. I feel assured, my dear sir, that your efforts are yet to confer distinction on our country in that department where we have been most deficient.

From my relative, Mr. Samuel G. Goodrich, I have Advice about the new volume. just learnt that you contemplate the publication of a volume, containing the most finished effusions of your pen. I rejoice to hear it, and to learn that the style of execution will be elegant. It will, I hope, contain the piece to which I have alluded. May I venture to add that, with the habits of this country, the expense of work of taste cannot be made very large for a single volume; and that an elegant volume, not too large, might be followed by others with a greater probability of success. I beg you to consider me as a subscriber; and to accept the small sum enclosed as my payment in advance and as a testimony of my high respect for your talents. My wretched state of health and the pressure of multiplied duties have prevented me from cultivating that more intimate acquaintance which my feelings would have dictated. If there is any way in which I can serve you, pray give me the opportunity,

And believe me your sincere friend,

CHAUNCEY A. GOODRICH.

calamity that spread a gloom over the most busy part of the city of New York during the last summer. That the picture is drawn with a pathos and a feeling true of nature, every heart must own; and many can bear witness to a mournful exemplification of a portion of it in *our* humble village. Those who saw the tender assiduities, the heart-thrilling grief, of the agonized wife, over the couch of her departing husband, or heard her sorrow-moving accents, as she took a 'last, last look' at 'him she loved,' must admit that the poet has not indulged a mere fiction of the brain, but has portrayed the feelings of humanity with a sentiment and a tenderness inspired by the noblest and best affections of the heart."

His friend of the Microscope, Mr. Tuthill, now the editor of the Christian Spectator, still showed his interest in an excellent way : —

NEW HAVEN, November 30, 1822.

DEAR SIR, —

In accordance with what I mentioned to you when I saw you last, I send you, in company with this, ^{Letter from} the December number of the Spectator contain- ^{Mr. Tuthill.} ing a review of your poems. We have endeavored to state their literary merits candidly and justly, and to speak of their religious character kindly and affectionately, yet independently. I think the things that are suggested cannot fail to be taken in good part by you. Whatever may be your impression of the ability of the review, one thing, I think, you will readily admit ; it shows a pretty thorough and minute acquaintance with your poems and with your poetical powers.

I shall be glad to hear from you on this or any other subject. Pray, what are your prospects ? Do speak freely of them. You need not be told that, if I can in any way advance your interests, my services are at your command.

Yours affectionately,

C. TUTHILL.

I superscribe to the “care of Mr. Stone,” as I have seen some of your effusions in his paper. The one on the Dying Lover is inimitable.

C. T.

In the article here referred to by Mr. Tuthill, the writer complains of the general spirit of his poetry, “as hostile to the influence of the Gospel, as well as of partic-

ular positive representations of a sceptical nature, which, together with a gloomy sententiousness peculiar to our author, are calculated to freeze up the very sources of devout and benevolent feeling.”

Another criticism from a religious point of view. The critic says that “The Suicide, though in some respects the most uninteresting of the longer pieces, and from the nature of the subject the most revolting to our feelings, is yet an instance of that force of thought, and that frenzied energy of mind, which can be infused into very harmonious verses.” “Imagination employed in the description of natural scenery is, if we mistake not, Dr. Percival’s forte.” “In the Coral Grove we perceive the imagination of Shakespeare himself. None but a poet of the true vein could have contrived such a dream of fancy.” “We doubt whether it would be possible for Dr. Percival to confine his attention to any one subject, however extensive or interesting, sufficiently long to produce a regular and continuous poem. Prometheus gives us, on the whole, the most correct idea of the author’s powers, and at the same time a melancholy proof of his vacillating views of religion.”

“If we may add a word concerning the metre of his poems, we would remark that, in general, they are very graceful and harmonious. He differs from ‘the pointed polish and elaborate elegance’ of Pope, who is the standard of harmony, — not as Cowper differs, who wants not the polish, but only the appearance of art in the manly flow of his numbers, — not as Southey, to whom belongs ‘every light bestowed by brilliancy,’ but whose glowing periods are not a perfect model of classical sweetness, — not as Byron, whose harmony is all that can consist with his strength and sententiousness; — but rather as Moore, who yields in elegance to no one, but whose flow is too

full to be compressed into Pope's point and antithesis. We place Dr. Percival, republican as he is, in the company of the laurelled and the noble, not because he has already reached their stature, but from a conviction that *he*, if any one from among our young countrymen, may aspire after their poetical distinction."

He now returned to Berlin to select and prepare for the new volume. At that day an American ^{In Berlin.} author was more ambitious than now of an English reputation. Irving had already published abroad and at home, and the name of Murray upon a title-page had then the power to carry off an edition of almost any book. At the suggestion of Mr. Bronson, Percival now wrote to Mr. I. Everett of Boston, who had extensive dealings with English publishers, about the republication of his works in London. Mr. Everett, in reply, ^{Thinks of re-publication abroad.} advised him to send his manuscript to Murray, who then "appeared to be looking towards our country with some expectation of finding new authors to employ," and kindly offered to assist him in any way he could.

Percival then went to Boston, in the last of December, 1822, to make more minute inquiries. His mind ^{In Boston.} appears now to have been intent upon some profession which, aside from letters, should gain him a living. His poems would soon be issued from the press, and then he would have nothing to do. The practice of medicine had been already given up; and he found that his literary reputation would do nothing to support him. His property, save what was spent in his preparatory studies, had also been invested chiefly in a valuable library; and without means for the future, he was anxiously casting about for a suitable occupation. It is a singular fact that, at

this time, his attention was turned to the taking of holy orders in the Episcopal Church. While in Boston he wrote a letter, dated January 7, 1823, to his friend the Reverend Hector Humphrey, who was then a Professor in Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., requesting to know how he might obtain them. In his reply Mr. Humphrey says: "The contents [of your letter], I assure you, were highly gratifying to me, although the subject was sudden and unexpected, and one upon which I should not at this time feel competent to advise you. You ask not my advice, however, but my information." He then goes on to furnish him with the needed directions, closing with the kind assurance "that nothing could give me greater satisfaction than to have it in my power to call myself in more senses than one your friend and brother." There is no evidence that he ever pursued the subject any further. But it is gratifying to know that so soon after his sad, melancholy, and dark views of revelation, he could turn his attention honestly to such sacred duties. The cause of his turning to the Episcopal Church, in such a case, was probably owing to his early education under his uncle, the Reverend Seth Hart, on Long Island. And yet his library, in its collection of English theology and miscellaneous publications, shows that, although throughout life he seldom attended divine worship, he was always a somewhat careful student of her teachings and literature.

He speedily returned from Boston and took his manuscripts to New York, intending to reside there while the volume was in press. But his stay was short. His room smoked, and the Frenchmen in an adjoining tenement kept up a continual playing upon the violin. He found other troubles. But the noise

Thinks of
holy orders
in the Epis-
copal Church.
He takes his
manuscripts
and goes to
New York.

and the music were in themselves too much for him ; and suddenly, to the astonishment of all, the poet had disappeared. He became disheartened with the publication. Further light is thrown upon his conduct and feelings at this time by the part of my communication from Professor Fowler which follows : —

Not very long after Percival became known to the country as a poet, I happened to meet in New Haven my old friend Fitz-Greene Halleck, the poet, who had just returned from his travels abroad. I proposed to him to call upon Percival, who was personally a stranger. To this he readily consented. Accordingly we went to Percival's room, a retired chamber in the house of Mr. Johnson in Chapel Street. When the two poets met, there was certainly a great contrast between them. The one was a man of the world, polished and fashionably dressed, fresh from foreign travel, of warm manners, ready sympathies, fascinating address, and graceful conversation. The other was Percival, such as I have described him to be. During the first part of the interview they were still apart, though in the presence of each other. After a while Percival became responsive, the coldness passed off, and the souls of the two poets, in full and free communion, flowed on in a delightful stream of conversation. Recollecting this interview, I addressed a letter to the survivor, Mr. Halleck, asking him for some remembrances of Percival. To this he wrote me the following reply : —

Departs suddenly.

Professor
Fowler's
recollections
again.

An interview
between
Percival
and Fitz-
Greene
Halleck.

TO PROFESSOR WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

GUILFORD, CONN., August 13, 1863.

DEAR SIR, —

I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 3d instant.

Letter from
Mr. Halleck.

I well remember the interview with Percival to which you allude and for which I was so deeply indebted to your kindness; and I blush to remember that, in endeavoring to draw him out in conversation, I inflicted upon you both more of my own rambling talk than was meet or interesting. He certainly proved himself, on the occasion, rather a courteous listener than an intrusive speaker, saying very little, but saying that little exceedingly well.

At a dinner party
in New Haven.

Several years afterwards, I had the pleasure of dining with him at the table of a gentleman of your acquaintance in New Haven, who had done me the honor of inviting me specially to meet Percival. He then took gradually and gracefully the lead in conversation, and kept it, blending grave topics with gay, during the dinner and in the drawing-room after, to the delight of a circle of some seven or eight of us, including two or three ladies, one of whom has since told me how agreeably disappointed she was to find, in the place of the morose and silent and bashful personage she had been led to expect, so cheerful and charming a companion. He was then deep in the study of the languages of Northern Europe, and told a love story or two, whose scenes were laid in Sweden, in so interesting a manner, that she now blends him with her pleasant recollections of the romances of Miss Bremer, and the music of Jenny Lind.

I was introduced to him for the first time as far back as 1821 or 1822 in New York, where he was passing a few weeks and was a frequent guest of Mr. Cooper, the novelist, and of a circle of gentlemen delighting in literature and its specialties, all of whom appreciated and admired him alike as a man and a man of letters, and were very desirous that he should become a resident of New York, and make authorship a pursuit as well as a pastime, with a view to which they tried to persuade him to publish a new volume of poems. A reminiscence connected with the subject may, possibly, aid in supplying you with materials for the contemplated work you mention.

On Percival's return to New Haven, Mr. William L. Stone, then the editor of the Commercial Ad-
vertiser, opened a correspondence with him, ^{Percival's acquaintance with Colonel Stone.} referring to the desired volume, and offering his services in obtaining a publisher, carrying the work through the press, etc., and for a time had reason to hope that his request would be granted; but after a delay of some weeks, Percival wrote him that circumstances had put it out of his power to devote himself to poetry, and had compelled him to accept employment in that most degrading and disgraceful of all occupations, — the editorship of a party newspaper! As Mr. Stone had long and honorably held that position, and cherished it dearly as a source, not only of power and profit, but of social pleasure, the *mal apropos* ingenuousness of the sensitive poet amused us all exceedingly, and no one more so than Mr. Stone himself. His son survives him, and resides, I believe, in New York at this moment. The letter would form a curious item in the forthcoming biography.

I shall be happy to hear from you at all times on this

and all subjects interesting to you, and hope that you will not allow us long to wait for a volume so certain to delight and interest us.

Believe me, dear sir,

Most truly yours,

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

PROFESSOR W. C. FOWLER.

As Colonel Stone and his excellent and accomplished wife are both numbered with the dead, I applied for information concerning the poet to their son, Mr. W. L. Stone, who has inherited the taste and talent of both parents. In his reply he sent me an extract from a letter addressed to him by his aunt, Miss W——, the sister of Mrs. Stone; an original piece of poetry not before published; and the following letter written by Percival to his father:—

TO COLONEL WILLIAM L. STONE.

NEW HAVEN, February 29, 1823.

SIR, —

I have been informed by S. G. Goodrich, that Mr. Wiley has obtained the requisite number of subscribers, and that he is ready to put my volume to the press when I have forwarded him my copy. I have sent him my selections, but he insists on something new. I am in no condition to furnish it. He has neglected to pay me what he had engaged, and in a miserable hour I engaged as an editor. I assure you, I am most thoroughly sick of it. I do not wish this volume published till I am in a situation to superintend it myself. I wish to make it in every respect worthy of myself and of

Letter to
Colonel
Stone.

my country. But how can I do it, when I cannot obtain even the pittance of forty dollars, and when I am forced to scribble for a country newspaper to get my bread? I am in a strait betwixt two,—
Concerning the volume publishing in New York.
 on the one hand, I wish the publication to be made as the only bright opening before me to escape the wretched thralldom in which I now am; and on the other, I do not wish it to go forward unless I can be put in a situation where I can do justice to it and to my own reputation. I ask only one thing. Let me be free and at ease until I can prepare this volume. Let me have no other care but this, and I will try to supply something new, equal to what has gone before. I am really desirous to supply much that is new, but I shall not attempt to supply a line until I am delivered from my present condition. When this volume is prepared as I wish it to be, I care not what comes next. I shall consider myself then as poetically defunct, and shall have no other object in view than to accomplish my destiny. I have written to Mr. Wiley, but I can get no answer. Please to write me and let me know all about this affair.

Yours, &c.,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

NEW YORK, March 4, 1823.

SIR,—

Your favor of the 29th ultimo is now before me; and while I am glad to hear from you, still I am sorry that you are not in better spirits. I hope, however, that ere this the clouds have blown away. I regret that you are so soon wearied with your new em-
Colonel Stone's reply.

ployment; for although neither riches nor a superabundance of honor attend the editorial corps of this country, still I had hoped that your salary would yield you a genteel support, while the duties of the office would be so light that you could appropriate more than half of the time to your favorite literary pursuits. And I am yet induced to believe that after a few weeks of experience you will find such to be the fact.

As to the proposed publication of your works in this city, it appears to me there can be little, if any, difficulty in the way. It is true, that when you went away, we (who took an active part in the business) supposed that it was your intention to write something new at all events; and we also thought it was understood that certain alterations would be made in respect of your ethical, or rather, religious, opinions. Such alterations would add to your fame and increase your profits. Such was the impression under which we labored; and many subscribers were obtained by myself and others, only by our making a pledge upon both those points. Having said thus much, it is needless for me to disguise that when your letters came to Wiley, *absolutely refusing to alter a line or to write anything new*, we were not a little disappointed and somewhat chagrined. I wrote a long letter to L——, and requested him to see you; but he informs me that he did not receive mine until the day after you left Berlin for New Haven. However, the complement of subscribers was obtained very soon, and Mr. Wiley is at any moment ready to proceed with the work. You complain that Mr. Wiley has not written to you lately. However, your friend Bronson told me he wrote to you, informing you of his exertions and splendid success in obtaining subscriptions, and that you did not

An effort to
have the
publication
go on.

answer him. By your last letter to Mr. Wiley, he (and so did we) thought you wished the work suspended Subscriptions enough ob- for the present. And if the work was sus- tained. tained by your request, he of course did not deem it necessary to remit the forty dollars. I have seen Mr. Wiley to-day. He has not the money to advance, but I will see Cooper in a day or two, and I presume there will be no difficulty about that.

By your letter to me I perceive that you are no less anxious than myself that the publication should be worthy of yourself and of your country. I also am happy to perceive that it is your wish to add something new. But you say you shall not supply a line until "delivered from your present condition." Here I do not exactly understand you. Do you mean that you must be delivered from your paper? I should think not. One day in a week, well applied, is enough for a paper of once a week. But if you mean that you cannot superintend the publication while at New Haven, I have only to say, — come here for a few weeks. You can write enough for the paper here and send on by mail, without stopping your salary for a moment; and you shall be welcome to a desk Personal kindness of Colonel Stone. in my office, or even a small private room, to a bed in my little house, and to a seat at my humble table. One thing is certain, — the work must go on, and the sooner the better, both for your sake and the sake of your friends, who have taken an interest in this matter.

I do not know that I have more to say at present. Mr. Goodrich, who is now here, will take this letter and converse with you more fully upon the subject.

Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM L. STONE.

DR. JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

The extract from Miss W——'s letter, already mentioned, to the son of Mr. Stone is as follows :
 An unlooked- for change. "Percival was very eccentric, and I think at last deranged. He was more free in communicating to your mother than to most, perhaps to any one. He was subject to deep dejection ; and when he was quite in the depths he would come to her, usually spending several days at the house ; but he came and went suddenly. This particular piece she found instead of *him* one morning at the breakfast-table. It was on her plate, and he was not seen or heard of for some time."

"MUSINGS AT THE HOUSE OF A FRIEND.

A poetical
farewell.

"In the midst of my troubles and pain,
 I welcome this fav'rite retreat ;
 Unmolested I here can attain
 A solitude quiet and sweet.
 No troublesome visitor calls,
 No modest inquirers perplex,
 No insolent gazers appeal,
 No officious civilities vex.

"'Tis no place for refining or sighs, —
 No murmurings fall on the ear,
 Duty teaches the blessings to prize,
 Shed for *others'* misfortune the tear.
 Love, Peace, and Benevolence meet
 In union delightful and rare,
 While religion provides them a sweet
 To mix in the cup of their care.

"You may call this a fanciful dream,
 And say it exists not in life ;
 You may tell me mortality's stream
 Is ever with concord at strife ;

But God as if willing to show
His blessing can quiet the stream,
Has here made it peacefully flow,
And experience has proved *it no dream.*"

TO MRS. STONE, BY PERCIVAL.

I am here compelled again to break off the narrative of Professor Fowler in order to resume my own.

Shortly after the poet returned from New York, probably early in February or in the latter part of January, he wrote the letter, of which the following is evidently a copy, to one of his confidential friends in that city, — most likely to Mr. Yvonnet : —

When I came here I had determined to write to no one. I found myself forced to shut myself out from society, or have recourse to employments ^{A sad letter.} which I had sworn not to engage in. I chose the first; and I determined as long as I was under that compulsion to share my evils with no one, not even in words, much less with those who never knew any other evils but the ennui of redundancy. I do not write now to complain or upbraid. The world may value me as they choose, and I will value myself as I choose. I will never take anything without rendering an equivalent, neither will I give anything without an equal return, — not in the same coin, but in that which can be easiest spared. Consequently, unless I am paid well, I shall publish nothing more. In that I am resolved. Whatever I may write shall never see the light until I receive that without which the highest talents only make me a higher sort of beggar.

But I have written enough on this. I know what is before me. I must be wretchedly poor or abandon literature. I must have a profession of the common sort, and perhaps I may not wholly fail.

I have forwarded my selections to Mr. Wiley, he having written me that he was ready to put the work to press. It is more than two weeks since I have heard from him. May be he will play me the trick Mr. Gilman did. I am a little desirous to know if the thing is going on. I have written to ask one favor of you, to learn if the work is in press, and what progress it is making, and send me a report. I shall be very much obliged to you if you will do it. I think you may learn of Arthur Bronson.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

An opening in some direction, an occupation by which he could gain a living, now became of serious importance to him. At this juncture, Gray and Hewitt, the publishers of the Connecticut Herald, a weekly journal, applied to him to edit their paper, promising him, on condition that he furnished two columns of original letter-press on an average weekly, and took the oversight of the paper, that he should have, as his salary for one year, one half of all the additional subscriptions which his reputation and ability as editor might bring them; and in case the subscriptions were not so numerous, and his half did not amount to or was only one hundred and twenty-five dollars a quarter, he was to have a salary of five hundred dollars a year. This contract was signed the 15th of February, 1823, at New Haven; and immediately Percival's name appeared upon the heading, and the names of new subscribers began to pour in. A change was also observed in the paper. He began his labors with the following editorial, taken from the Connecticut Herald, of date February 18, 1823:—

The editorial department of the Herald will in future be conducted under my superintendence.

I have judged a frank avowal of my views and intentions more honorable to myself than any effort at concealment would be; and I have therefore taken this method of informing the public what they may expect from my exertions. I have never been enrolled in the lists of any party; and in assuming the character of an editor, I do not intend to associate myself with any one set of men or opinions. I trust I shall always be found where there is the greatest weight of evidence, without regard to considerations of party or interest. It will always be my aim to promote the truly laudable design of this paper, and to make it what it professes to be.

Although our country is now in a state of profound peace, undisturbed by foreign violence or civil commotions, yet the time may not be far distant when we shall again be called to try the solidity of our institutions, and to prove how strong a shock they may stand uninjured. The best security is precaution; and institutions like ours, which have their foundations in the minds and hearts of a free people, can be secured only by rendering those minds enlightened and keeping those hearts uncorrupted. Nothing can contribute more to this effect than a well-regulated and unshackled press, — a press that has no fear of executive frown on the one hand, nor any dread of a corrupt populace on the other. To preserve the freedom of this press inviolate, and to restrain this freedom from licentious abuse; to present, in their fairest light the foundations and supports of our Constitution; to promote every institution and aid every endeavor which tends to strengthen and improve our National and State establishments; to keep a steady balance between the encroachments of a consolidating power

in the former, and the efforts of disunion in the latter, — will be my constant aim and my sincerest purpose. Unexperienced as I am in the chicanery of politics and the practical business of an editor, I cannot have the vanity to suppose that I shall always be ready to pass a correct judgment on the measures of our government or the other events that are passing in the world, or that I shall be able on every occasion to offer a profound remark. I may not have the good fortune to reach the character of a politician; but whatever remarks I may offer (and I shall not hesitate to give my opinion, as every citizen of a republic ought to when he has a fair opportunity) will, I trust, be suggested by no other motive but a conviction of their truth.

This paper has been attached to certain men and measures, and doubtless from honest motives. It will still be open as ever to the friends of such men and measures; and I shall never object to the insertion of any article couched in respectful language, however much it may differ from my opinions. My motto will be, "Hear with both ears and then judge." But I wish to have it distinctly understood that I shall not consider myself bound by the opinions of my predecessors. A decent regard will be paid to whatever they may have advocated; and whenever I differ from them, it will not be without stated reasons: but sooner than be bound to continue the strain that has gone before me, merely because it had a precedence in time, I would drop my pen forever.

But while I endeavor to render this paper impartial and catholic on every topic, I shall not wantonly attack the established feelings and institutions of society. Nothing is truer than that age brings disorder and infirmity on society as well as on individuals; but no reasonable man

would think of correcting those evils by extirpating the institutions around which they have collected, unless the disease has become desperate. But although nothing can be expected from sudden and wanton attacks but irritation on the part of those who are attached to ancient habits, yet much may be done by fair and liberal inquiry, and that inquiry shall not be wanting here. The great principles of morals and government are so long and so well established that one had better call in question the reputation of Homer and Shakespeare than doubt their soundness. The man who sets himself deliberately in array against them can only be considered insane. But it is not so with every opinion which has weight at a given period. We have too often seen the public mind hurried away by extravagances, not to be convinced that there may be such a thing as salutary doubting; and that *he* is not to be persecuted, but applauded, who dares to assert those opinions which are of constant duration, and to question all others.

He intends to
be a watchful
guardian of
the public
mind.

On one point I may have occasion to express an opinion on the question of securing our independence of the arts and industry of other nations. On a subject which has divided the opinions of the first men of this nation it may be presumptuous to decide; and indeed it has long appeared to me a question where one can be better employed in striking a balance than in warmly espousing either party. National independence ought undoubtedly to be our first object, but I should hardly think it promoted by stopping all interchange of commodities with foreign nations. We might, indeed, live within ourselves; but who would wish to exchange the enlightening and stirring spirit of European commerce for the deadening policy of China? But it is not the place to discuss this

question in a prospectus, and I will dismiss it to a further opportunity.

So far as literature is concerned, it will be my endeavor to promote its pure and vigorous growth in our country. A newspaper can only indirectly promote the cause of literature. By itself adopting a pure style, and by justly praising what is good and censuring what is low and barbarous, it may do something at least to rescue us from the reproaches of European critics.

Such are my intentions, and such will be my endeavors in conducting this paper; and while my great objects will be truth and utility, I shall not hesitate to use every honorable means to enliven and make it agreeable.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

NEW HAVEN, February 17, 1823.

All his editorials* were written in the same manly and elevated tone. They are as carefully and thoughtfully wrought out as those contributed to our modern Spectators and Saturday Reviews. His poetry also appeared frequently in its appropriate corner.

Character of
his editorials.

* Appendix C.





CHAPTER X.

1823.

LETTERS TO MR. YVONNET. — PERSONAL REVELATIONS. — CLASSICAL STUDIES. — HIS POEMS FINALLY PUBLISHED BY WILEY. — REPRINTED IN LONDON.



IS correspondence with the theological student in New York was now resumed.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, April 17, 1823.

DEAR SIR, —

I am no letter-writer. I never kept up a regular correspondence in my life; and one reason why I have not is because my budget of news would ^{Letters to} Mr. Yvonnet. have always been merely a sorry detail of my own beggarly miseries. You begin with my new employment. What! Editor of a newspaper? Has it come to this? Must I drudge in the office of a country paper, with political squibs, set myself up to be spattered with the filth of every shoemaker and butcher who can get his wretched scrawls printed in pilots, balances, etc.? Yes, I must do it or something worse, or starve. It ^{His view of} _{editorship.} is a case of base necessity. A few approve, but most disapprove. If they disapprove, let them do something to prevent the necessity of it. Heaven

knows I came to this employment with every feeling of desperate repugnance, but I could do no better. It is not an employment of my choosing, but one to which I have been driven.

As for the volume at Wiley's, it shall never be published unless it is done without and against my consent. I am serious on this point. I have been very ill used in that affair. I was led into it by the pressure of circumstances. I opposed it at first, but I was in the power of certain individuals. I will not tell you what has since followed; but I consider the contract as violated on the part of Wiley, and I am determined that nothing shall compel me to allow the publication but the strong arm of the law. I am utterly opposed to any publication by subscription. It is a kind of begging. I can edit a newspaper, but I cannot beg. I shall never *realize* anything from my pen, unless I get it from a newspaper; my volumes are worse than nothing to me; they have involved me in debt. If I can ever sell my copyrights for any consideration with acceptance, I shall do it; but I have no hopes even of that. So farewell to the Muses. They cannot live without food and clothing, any better than Faith and Hope can. We don't even pretend that the modern *Graces* (I do not mean the three sisters of yore, but the Christian Graces), — we do not pretend that they can live without salaries. How then can they ask such delicate creatures as the Muses to *bide the pelt-ing of the pitiless storm*, and yet keep up a delightful concert for those who are very willing to listen, but seem determined not to *pay the poor pipers*? Seriously, I have suffered not only in heart, but in every other way that one can suffer where bodily extremities are not endured. I did rely somewhat (though doubtingly) on the patronage

of my countrymen. They have punished me most cruelly for my wrong confidence. I will not quarrel with them. I ask nothing of a people who will lavish their patronage on such a vulgar book as the *Pioneers*. They and I are well quit. They neglect me, and I despise them.

I am the editor of a country newspaper. I shall weekly insert some of the finest things I can write, as well as some articles on the most indifferent topics, in the hope that I may at last shame them into their duty. For though I say it, — who should not say it? — where will they go to find one who can do that justice to despised American genius that I can? But I will not do it, while I am so neglected — shall I say abused? — as I have ^{He feels} neglected. You write about your classic enthusiasm as if you were in earnest. I have known something of it myself, but I cannot partake of such emotions now. Everything is dead within me. I sometimes almost exclaim, with Coleridge, “Would that my earthly existence were ended!” But I must live on and taste still more of the bitter apples that hang on the down-hill side of life, — all soot and gall.

I know not how it is, but I cannot rest; I am eternally harassed by *the fear that darkens in the future*. I can find no anchoring ground. I sometimes wish intensely that I could find some fairy pilot to guide me on to my destined haven, — but they have no existence. I have been behind the scenes; and although at a distance they are as lovely as the soft blue mountains, yet when I approach, the rocks and crags stand out bare and ragged. Is the fault in the things seen or in the eye that sees them? I have the gallantry to believe that I see them through a false medium, and that they are quite good enough for those who deserve them.

Now this is all sad trifling, and so I will take another tack. I have read the classics somewhat, and one of them with a little like devotion, — Homer. I have His Homeric studies. read his two Poems through in the original, and many parts over and over. I should like to read him again. But I have suffered too much on the great waters to think of taking a journey to Greece to read the *Iliad* ἐπὶ καλλικολώνην. I can imagine enough, with the aid of Clarke and Chevalier, to fancy I see the plain of Troy extended before me, all burning over with the shields and spears and helms of the contending armies. I can walk, too, along the shore of the sea and ascend Ida, the mother of wild beasts, and the snow-capt Olympus. I have known too well what it is to be among strangers without a *sou* in my pocket to think of starting on such a pilgrimage with only one or two hundred dollars. I fear I should appear in Ithica too literally in the character of ὁ πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς, — i. e. a beggar, — and I doubt whether I should bend as well the great bow which baffled all the suitors, — τὸν βιὸν ἐκ κέρσος μεγάλιοι ἐλάφοιο. I have given you enough of bad Greek, and so I will haul to the wind again.

You may think, from this part of the letter, that I am in good spirits. The most agitated waters sparkle most. There is a laugh, too, that is bitter. Satan always has a grin, you know, at least so the painters represent his infernal majesty. Perhaps they have never seen him in his drooping fits. They might then give us such a downward turn to his mouth as they now do one upward. You have doubtless seen the bust of Voltaire. He looks to me as if he would bite a tenpenny nail in two, he grins so spitefully.

But I perceive I have written to the end of my sheet;

and so, to continue my allegory, I must down halyards, reef sail, and out anchor. You may perhaps think I have taken lessons of Benny Pump. I did so till I was heartily sick of him and all his crew. But I must have a care how I talk of the star of the ascendant, especially when I am so near my setting, or rather so offuscated by *its opaque scintillations* (see Fairfield). But it was a villanous eclipse. I have only room to write,

Your humble servant,

J. G. P.

In a letter to another friend, dated New Haven, May 28, 1823, he sums up bitterly his literary career:—

“I have just been reading a review of my last volume in the *Christian Disciple*, and freely confess the justice of the criticism. I have written too hastily and carelessly, and I knew it at the time. I have written too, of late, more out of spite than with any sincerity; but I have done with such feelings now. I would have done with my pen altogether, had I not fastened myself for a time to a newspaper, and were I not driven to it by absolute necessity. My wish is to engage in the practice of medicine; but I cannot do so, simply because I have nothing to start with. But it is useless for me to say another word on this subject. I have brought myself into this necessity, and I can see no possible way of extricating myself.

He sums up
bitterly his
literary
career.

“It is altogether impossible for me to gain anything from my poems, nor is it my wish to do so; for I really do not wish things that were thrown off so hastily to be republished, however much of unformed and unfashioned genius they may contain. In all the mass of poetry that I have printed, there is not a single article that was not

written hastily and published without anything like a careful revision,—some of them almost exactly word for word as they were first conceived. Now this is wrong, I acknowledge, but I am not in a situation to correct the error now. It puts me in a truly unpleasant situation. I have, unwisely and against your advice, though in this I have followed the advice of *grave and reverend seniors*, relied somewhat upon my literary efforts. The consequence is, I have emptied my pockets and can get nothing in return, so that I have been driven to put my name to a newspaper even for my daily bread.”

In Mr. Yvonnet's reply of June 11, 1823, he asks :
 “Is the report true that you have begun a large poem

Extracts

from one of

Mr. Yvonnet's

letters.

intended to be of a more regular and settled plot and finish than any you have already written?

or did that report originate from the fact of your binding yourself so closely last fall to the writing of the second part of *Prometheus*?” He adds a word in regard to the painter, S. F. B. Morse: “I met an artist some weeks ago at J. Lawrence's with James Hillhouse, named Morse, from New Haven,—know you anything about him? I hear he has a picture exhibiting in town, but I have as yet found no opportunity of visiting it. Is he a smart fellow? In the few words we passed with each other I was pleased with him. At any rate, his face is good,—not handsome, but lighted up and intellectual. Have I hit right?” Another passage throws light upon the difficulty between Percival and his publisher: “I am disposed to think, with Coleman in the *Connoisseur*, that booksellers are governed in their ideas of things by the authors whose works they publish. Cooper is Wiley's standard, and he puffs him off as the greatest literary genius in America!” It touched Per-

cival's pride and wounded his sense of right, that Wiley, who was also the publisher of Cooper's novels, should so continually set up the novelist as the leading star in literary circles to the exclusion of others, and this was probably one cause of the difficulty between them. It seemed to Percival that Wiley depreciated him. This will explain the bitterness in portions of the following letter:—

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, June 14, 1823.

SIR,—

I shall write you a letter on coarse paper, because I have no better and have nothing wherewith to buy any better. I am absolutely without a cent in the world; and, what is worse, without a single friend who has the power or inclination to aid me. I have been most scurvily treated by the proprietors of the Herald. They failed about two weeks ago, and made no provision for my remuneration. They were then owing me at least ninety dollars. They would have left me in the third class of creditors; but a friend of mine, being one of the assignees, got me a place in the second class, at the tail of it. Their journeymen and their bank debts occupied the first class. Debtors have the right here to class their creditors as they please, in case of failure. The consequence is that I am robbed of my hard-earned wages, stripped of all employment, and in debt. I have stated my circumstances to two or three who I thought would sympathize with me. I have only exposed myself to mortification, and given them an opportunity to triumph. I am now compelled to sell myself as a weekly

laborer to the assignees of the paper for a mere living. I am absolutely reduced as low as a man of talents can be. I could swear and curse if there was any profit in so doing; but it is better *to bear patiently the dispensations of an all-wise and gracious Providence*. I believe that is the cant of the day. My situation has been peculiar. I have been completely the slave of circumstances ever since I attained my majority. I have never been able to realize my calculations. Half the time I have been bound down to inaction for the want of means of moving. When I took my degree of M. D. I would He gives a brief sketch of his life. have begun the practice, but I was in miserable health and worse spirits, and without funds. I could get none till eighteen months afterwards, and then I had spent them in the necessary expenses of living and in the publication of my poems. Since then I have been continually embarrassed, and now I am destitute.

When I first appeared as a poet, many, and those of no little consideration, flattered me with the prospect of independence. I did not half believe them, and yet I believed them enough to put some confidence in them. My paper has utterly failed, and now those very men would not lift a finger to assist me. One of them absolutely advised me not to think of my profession, but to rely on literature. That man now would not aid me one cent to find that place in my profession which I have lost by listening to his advice. This is not all. The public has really refused to employ me in any profession, because I have assumed the character of a poet. They have determined, because I have chosen moonshine, that I shall live by moonshine. This is my brief history.

As to what you say about that snuffy-booby of a W——, would to God I could forget it all from beginning to end ! It has been far the most mortifying occurrence in my life. If I ever meet you, I will certainly detail to you the whole affair. And that S——, he wanted me to write comic addresses, and barbers' squibs, and Bonfanti advertisements, and yet he had the impudence to style himself my friend and patron ! Then there is young B——, he set himself up for my Mæcenas, and as such he very graciously demanded of me to furnish forthwith original matter for an 8vo volume of four hundred pages ! So much for my friends in New York. That city is completely Gothamized in my sight. I have no inclination that way, nor indeed to any other city.

I have within me an indescribable longing for a home. I have never known one from my childhood. The family was early scattered, and strangers intruded into the domestic sanctuary. I have in my imagination some most exalted conceptions of the happiness of a pure and unalloyed home. I believe much in the sanctity of a man's castle, and on that ground I took a neat little house near New Haven, which I regret I ever abandoned. I should become a most devout worshipper of the Lares and Penates, if they were admitted into our creed ; and I am sometimes almost tempted to regret that that beautiful portion of the Greek mythology was ever abandoned. Although I have indulged in some splenetic remarks on matrimony, yet I can conceive of nothing nearer heaven than a happy marriage, — one where there is a union of equal and congenial minds. If I could find such a one, I should really think it the most desirable of all attainments. But I fear I should be wretchedly disap-

Allusions
to his friends
in New
York.

His longing
for a home.

pointed in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, perhaps in a tenfold ratio. In the present state of society, there are so many interposing obstacles, that it is enough to frighten a Hercules to attempt it. So much money is needed to support a family in anything like decent comfort, — so difficult is it to find one whose mind is fitly cultivated, — there is so little good health, and so many fashionable complaints, — that it really makes the matrimonial prospect darker to me than Erebus. In my case there are so many peculiar disqualifications, that I absolutely despair. Tasso says: —

Cogliam d' amor la rosa: amiamo or quando
Esser si puote amato amando, —

“Let us gather the rose of love, — let us love now, when loving we can be loved in return.” That *now* is gone to me forever.

There is only one thing left for me to do, and that is to engage in such a course of common business that I can live unmolested in my own castle. His last re-
source. It is absolutely too late for me to think of adding anything more to my poetical reputation. I have done all that I probably ever shall do. Nothing is finished; all has been thrown off hastily and crudely, without any forethought or after correction. Perhaps a thousand plans have floated through my brain; but I have never allowed myself to indulge in any one of them, because I knew I could never depend upon the time for its completion. I have never had anything beforehand. I should think myself happy, if I could get a cell in Tasso's mad-house, for then I could depend on a permanent residence; but now I change with the moon.

I am just on the eve of a revolution in my affairs. I am goaded up to that state of irritation where a little ex-

citement might upset the balance. I am surrounded by enemies, . . . men of no mind, who would, if possible, belittle me to their own miserable level. I must fly. I care not much where, but somewhere. There may be something dreadfully repulsive about me. If we had lived together, we might have been enemies before this. But I fear I shall never live with any one longer. A few days more, and I trust I shall find a place where I may take some repose. I am determined to go again to the home where I was born. I can have a chamber there; and although it is now no home to me, yet it is better than any other place in my power of choosing. I abandon New Haven. I have not a solitary friend here, not one congenial mind, not one whom I associate with. I have lately had some intimacy with Morse, while taking a portrait of my phiz. Your judgment is not far from correct. He is a good artist, and has a mind much above the common level.

He is determined to return to Berlin.

As for the Whiting family, I have not seen them this three months. I found myself an unwelcome visitor, and I left off calling there. It is just so with every other place where I visited. They all gave satisfactory proofs that I was not acceptable, and I have therefore cleared out. So it goes with me. Where it will end, time can alone reveal. I hope you will have wisdom enough to stick to your profession and not think of living on moonshine. You will then escape the miserable fate of,

Thinks himself neglected.

Votre pauvre diable,

J. G. P.

The feeling here expressed is more fully revealed in a letter to his mother, written two days later, in which he says:—

“It is a fact that I cannot possibly find a friend here who will lift a finger to aid me in any enterprise A letter to his mother. whatever. My books are hopeless. I shall realize nothing from them. I see no alternative but to bring back my library to Berlin, and put it in a place of security (for I will not sacrifice it at auction), and, if I cannot stay there myself, set out on a journey of discovery, or make my way to some better place of residence, if I possibly can. I must depend on myself, and that too without anything to start with. But I cannot live as I have done here. Paying an enormous price for boarding, and living in the most painful restraint and exposed to every kind of insult and mortification, I have tried out the polite world, and find it hollow. I want nothing to do with it. I am little fitted to associate with the common world, too; but they have more sincerity. If I could live with you, I could so husband my expenses that I have little fear that I could not support myself with my pen, without mixing with the world at all. But I cannot do it, situated as I am now. Everything I can earn goes to feed some harpy. I have no resting-place, no place where I can use or enjoy my books; and I had much rather leave them in a place of more security.”

In his reply, Mr. Yvonnet explains why the poet was not popular in New Haven:—

“You speak of your total destitution of friendship and sympathy. Do you know, my dear Doctor, that A gentle rebuke from Mr. Yvonnet. you are partial in ascribing it altogether to the conduct of others? Think me not unfair, if I tell you candidly that what you complain of is, in some degree, owing to yourself. There are certain things in which independence of mind ought always to be exercised; and perhaps some of the good people of New Haven may

have thought you have carried this too far. I am sure that this very thing (for which I do not censure, but rather applaud you) has been one chief cause of the alienation of those persons who professed to be your friends. They had hoped, perhaps, that you would yield to them in some degree, and no doubt it would have been beneficial for you if you had. But then I am not sorry, upon the whole, that you held on your usual course. They may eventually learn a lesson from it, that all men are not alike made to bend and crouch to others. This, it may be, is one cause of the conduct of which you complain. If you could bring your mind to be more conversant (I know it is a difficult task) with those whom you cannot but esteem beneath you, it may be of some benefit to you. In fact; this seems to be the philosophy of getting on through life, to yield (or seem to yield) a little to others. As to one family of whom you spoke,—the Whitings,—I know you are mistaken in your opinion about them. You say that you found yourself an unwelcome visitor, and therefore left off calling upon them. I am sorry, very sorry, such an impression has been left on your mind. I could hardly think it of the Whitings; and I candidly believe, Doctor, that if you would yourself be more familiar, you would find that no persons liked you better than the members of that family.”

And this was true. He was always welcome, but had now become so sensitive to the attention paid to him, that it was difficult even for his best friends to avoid wounding him in their acts of personal kindness. He took note of every word, every look, every act, and, putting his own construction upon them, gave them often a meaning quite other than that intended. It is easy to see therefore, that, although the entire master of himself

He is mor-
bidly sensi-
tive.

among his books at home, he was less than almost any man adapted to make his way in social circles.

In the following letter he gives a vivid account of himself at this time.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, July 18, 1823.

DEAR SIR, —

I received your letter this morning, and as I happen to have leisure I will send you an answer. Indeed, my time is all leisure. For I have no employment and no funds. I live in expectation of —. I have just made a contract with a bookseller, who, I think, will do me better justice than the *Knight* of the *Pinch*. But my success is notable, inasmuch as it is wonderfully small. I receive twenty per cent of the edition in copies, which I must sell myself as well as I can. I made the contract with him, because I owed him one hundred and fifty dollars for the last part of *Prometheus*. Perhaps sixty or seventy copies of that book have been sold, though I doubt whether fifty have been retailed. I have succeeded in getting rid of that debt by almost giving the bookseller an edition, and besides engaging to write a third part, and give it to him for nothing. He had a hand over me, and I concluded it was best to do anything I could to escape the blow which he could give me. I have now cleared myself from the more immediate consequences of my authorship, not however from the collateral consequences; for by making my calculations on better success, I have involved myself somewhat for necessities. I am here without employ-

He is an author without encouragement.

ment or the prospect of any. I have not wherewith to supply even the wants of nature, much less any of those means which are absolutely necessary ^{His poverty.} to enable me to put my foot in the stirrup. I have no one to go to for the means. I can only sit still and watch for the tide's rising. They say it is darkest just before day. I hope it will be dawn soon with me then, for it is dark enough now.

I have some apologies to make for my last letter. It was written under high excitement. I am cooler now, and I will write more rationally on this sheet. But to tell you the truth, I am well determined to leave New Haven, — not for my native place, my relations will not admit me there. I have written them about it twice and urged a reply, but I can get no answer. I ^{Reasons why he could not retire to Berlin.} have nothing to go there with, so that I may see them face to face about it. I know, too, they are not the best disposed towards me. I have been unfortunate in the affair of cash, and you know there are some who will welcome nothing but cash. Not that it is so with them. But they do not wish to have me go empty to my native place, because it will afford cause of triumph to their neighbors. They have not firmness enough to bear that, and therefore they had rather I should seek another asylum. I shall think, then, no more of my native place. But I will go to some obscure spot or other. I cannot and will not live in a place where I am excluded from all society, and am like a desperate man. There was one place where I once was welcomed, and warmly so, at least apparently. I can gain no admittance there now. I find I can live alone. I can spend a whole day with my books. But when weary evening comes, I feel the want of relaxation, and that, too, without

sinking into mere animal stupor or unprofitable musing.

His solitary life. I love conversation of my cast. I am as enamored of it as Madame De Staël. But I have it not. I had one with whom I could go on, one who could keep up with me, and one who could lead me into pleasant paths too, — but I have none such now. I am so much a *solitaire*, that if you should call upon me now, I should, for the simple pleasure of wagging my tongue, tire you out with some dry, wearisome lecture of an hour or so; perhaps you would call it *prating pedantry*.

I will tell you just how it is. Now that I am poor and His literary reputation. unfortunate, they call me egotist, and pedant, and what not, and affect to treat me with studied neglect. It was not so a year since. I was rising then. I culminated too soon, and now my chariot is wheeling off to the westward.

Ἥμος δ' Ἡέλιος μετενίσσεται βουλυτόνδε,*

as Homer says, and very graphically; for it will be the hour of unyoking my oxen very soon. I shall in a little while have no more poetical acres to plough, and the poor devils who have drawn the vehicle and turned over the clods, i. e. the printers, will be let loose to wander away to the cool river, —

εἰς εὐπετὰν ὕδωρ,

i. e. they will have their full pay and get pasture enough for their labor; while I shall go home with weary knees to my supperless cottage and feast on moonshine. There will be one good thing about it, i. e. I shall turn up no more new furrows, or write no more new stuff, to draw after me a swarm of jackdaws and rooks, — i. e. ladies and

* Iliad, xvi. 779.

critics, in search of worms and grubs, i. e. beauties and blemishes, — and sha'n't be forced to hear them chatter over the one or croak over the other. How do you like me *in a figure*, as the Methodists say? I'll tell you *what*, as we Yankees say, I have a notion to be-
come *Lakeified*, that is, I am seriously inclined ^{His future purposes.} to settle on the bank of some one of our fine lakes, where I can have land and water around me, and where I shall find nothing *blue* on the *ground story*; i. e. I have an inclination to put on my saddle-bags and mount my horse, and go about to hold consultations with old grannies about one sovereign thing or another, such as slippery-elm bark or skull-cap. They call me Doctor; I must become a doctor in deed and in truth. That is my intention, and I shall take the country. My father was a country doctor, and I will follow his example. They have proposed to me to bind myself to the Herald on a new foundation. I have no notion of making myself a slave to row about the galley of some big man who has a purse, and wants some one to stand in the gap between him and the public. You see I make metaphors as well as Castlereagh, when he talked of a weeping crocodile sticking his hand in one's pocket. I am determined to have nothing more to do with newspapers. Your extract from Godwin pleases me well.* It is misery to depend on uncertain employments. I have done so too long. I must engage in some active employment. My health requires an active employment. I must take my profession and think of nothing higher than the young licentiate who has passed

* It was this, "That the intellect which depends on conversation for nutriment may be compared to the man who should prefer the precarious existence of a beggar to the possession of a regular and substantial income."

from his plough to his Cheselden, and then, after a little reading and a few lectures, — to the bedside. I must be humble. Wisdom dwells with prudence, and prudence with humility. After all, it will be pleasant to ride among the hills and mountains, and feel conscious that what I get is my own. It will be better than to live on expectation, and find disappointment at the end of it. The worst is, I have nothing to start with. But I must try

πᾶς τολματόν,

as Sappho said about love.

I have heard of Gotham,* but have not seen it. I am glad they have rubbed up Cooper. Perhaps you don't feel about him as I do. I can consider him nothing more than a literary *parasitic animal* (naturalists give that title to the creeping things that inhabit the outside of our craniums). What a thing that *Pioneers* is, with its most exalted character making *Virginia fence* on his way home from a bush tavern, after attending divine service on Christmas Eve, gloriously in the spirit, or rather the spirit in him; and that Ben Pump, soberly measuring out whole fathoms of sea-slang, and old Jamaica by the gallon; and Remarkable, with her sweet tooth, and old Natty Bum! Ho! and [behold] High-Dutchers and Low-Dutchers and Mounsheers and Molehags and Bay State, and Varmounters all to show what a great linguist he was. I have forgot Cuffee, *pop up gobbler*. Now all this is wretched, not a whit above

* A volume, "Gotham and the Gothamites, — a Medley," in which the publishers, authors, and wits of New York in those days were severely and personally satirized. It characterized Wiley as "the very Dennis of Wall Street"; Colonel Stone as "the factious Master Stone"; and made the most of Cooper's weakest point, — his vanity.

Coleman's broad grins and [. . .] pokers. It might do well enough to amuse the select society of a barber's shop or a porter-house. But to have the author step forward on such stilts and claim to be the lion of our national literature, and fall to roaring himself and set all his jackals howling (S——, C——, & Co.) to put better folks out of countenance,—why, it is pitiful, 't is wondrous pitiful, at least for the country that not only suffers it, but encourages it.

As for myself, I say nothing. I have written what I have written. Let others judge. They call me vain. Perhaps I have been so. If so, I will correct myself. But it was merely the innocent vanity of ex-hilaration. It was but the natural consequence of rising from the lowest state of depression, and finding myself on an eminence where I was looked at by my whole country, and seen too across the Atlantic, even from proud Augusta, if not Edina. It is a wonder that I was not thrown into *a vertigo of vanity*. As it is, it has cost me my most valued friend.

I will tell you one thing *sub rosa*. Morse's picture of Congress Hall, (have you seen it? if not it is too late now,) that picture has cost him one hundred and ten dollars to exhibit it in New York. Tell it not in Gath! He labored at it eighteen months, and spent many hundred dollars in its execution; and now he has to pay the public for looking at it, "largess, largess." Allston says it is a masterpiece of coloring and perspective. Who would write or paint any good thing for such a *fashionable vulgar* as ours? For my part, I am tired of patting the dogs. I will now turn to kicking them. I believe they will use me better then. If some sign-painter had only painted Nettleton preaching up an

He explains
his apparent
egotism.

The artist
Morse.

awakening, and sent it about the country, he would have filled his pockets with it, and so would Morse too. If I, instead of writing my present poetry, had written a heavy blank-verse melody on justification by faith alone (like Wilcox's *Age of Benevolence*, which went off like shot), or if I had written a long, dirty, draggling *tale*, I should have made my fortune. I should not have been as I am now, a good deal worse than nothing. But I must stop these complaints, and be a man. Let me only mount my *Rosinante*, and then Richard's himself again.

I have droned on through a poor, punning, complaining letter, as usual. Since I cannot correct my evils, I can make them light by punning on them. But it is time for me to stop. My sheet is done and I am tired. So, sir,

I remain as usual yours,

J. G. P.

P. S.—I have a little more to say. Did you ever study German? I have been dipping into it, and a His sketch of the German language. strange language it is in sound and construction, — sucking in its gutturals like a whirlpool, *ough*, — hissing out its sibilants like a goose, *eesh*, — and rolling round its oblique diphthongs like a sailor his quid, *foieer*. Then there are its compounds, *umgangs-sprache* round-about-going language, for the general language of polite conversation, as *wahrscheinlichkzit*, i. e. truth-seem-like-ness for probability. In its order, I will give a specimen exactly translated: "So is itself (even) more than possible (may-like); probable it is that to the almost round about by the sea encircled (around-floated) America, also by this way, from some one side, some one time new-comers (on-comelings) conveyed (to be carried) been have may."

Cart before the horse complete. But I find this employment so interesting that I have given it twelve hours a day. I have done another thing. Translates the Prometheus of Æschylus in six days. Week before last I translated, in six days, the *Prometheus Vincetus* of Æschylus. I invented a new blank measure for the chorus, of which I give you a line or two:—

“ Scarce could we gain our sire’s consent,
But gained; the rapid-rolling wind
Bore us along the stream of air.”

I shall not publish it, because it will be unpopular. I have rolled it into a *volumen*, and it sleeps now and forever in the dark.

Elsewhere he has written: “In the summer of 1823, about the time when engaged upon the Prometheus, and while reading Voss’s hexameter translation, I amused myself with rendering select passages from Homer in English hexameters, not without some self-gratification, and with, at the time, the encouraging approbation of Professor Kingsley.” His translation of Prometheus was the only literary work for which, during his last sickness, he manifested any anxiety. He seemed willing to rest his reputation as a poet on that alone. It is yet in manuscript; but as a transfusion of the spirit and power of the original into English verse, it has no superior in English literature. Many have tried their hand upon it, but this is the impassioned work of one who had in himself many of the traits which belong to the mythical Prometheus. In 1830 he wrote to a friend concerning it in these words: “In July, 1823, I wrote out a rough sketch of the Prometheus Bound of Æschylus. I wrote down my version as fast as I proceeded in the interpretation, and then put it by unreviewed, in *scriniis*, where it

has remained until now ; consequently beyond the legitimate period of nine years. I did not aim to give a refined and embellished translation, nor one closely literal, but by a somewhat free, yet faithful, and what seemed to me no unfitting paraphrase, to give plainly and boldly the Titanic force and majesty of the original. I rendered the whole in blank verse ; the dialogue in our decasyllabic heroics, and the choral measures generally in octosyllabics."

While engaged, for the lack of any more profitable employment, in these delightful studies, he again A letter to his mother about a home. addressed his mother a letter, dated July 17, 1823, in which he says : "I have been for several days expecting an answer to my letters. I cannot conceive why I have none, unless because you are determined not to write me. I will give you no further trouble than to read my letters, for I shall pay the postage of all I send. I have mentioned my wish to station myself somewhere in a secure and little-expensive situation, so that I might give myself to the improvement of my peculiar talents, to two of my friends, and they have approved it. They think I might, by adopting a more popular kind of writing, and by employing my duller hours in the simple labors of compiling something useful and salable, realize a better reward than I have yet done. But to do so, I must be in a different place from what I am here. I cannot live among people who have thrown me off from their friendship, and that apparently because I am unfortunate."

On the 31st of July he wrote to his friend Bronson, stating the reasons why he had given up the republication of his poems by Wiley six months ago. They were these : because Wiley suggested (it was not mentioned

in the contract) that he should add, as a matter of expediency, some original poetry, and because Wiley expected that he would stay in town during the preparation for the press, which, as we have seen, Percival was too much annoyed to do. But now, through the kindness of Colonel Stone, these obstacles were removed. Wiley was disposed to do all he could to complete the work; and Percival, at the request of Arthur Bronson, to which was added that of the pub-

The obstacles now removed to Wiley's publication of his poetry.

lisher and of Colonel Stone, took his manuscripts and went to New York to superintend the publication of the volume. He carried with him several new poems of uncommon merit, among which were *Mental Beauty*, *Mental Harmony*, and *Night Watching*. Both poet and publisher now labored harmoniously to bring the publication to a close. In September it was so far advanced as to make his personal superintendence no longer necessary. He then returned to New Haven, where he remained until the book was published, in November, 1823; when he took up his residence in Berlin, carrying with him his large and valuable library.

He finally takes up his residence in Berlin.

The promise to write a third part to *Prometheus* was never executed. It was promised to make up to Mr. Maltby the loss which he incurred in publishing the earlier volumes of his poetry; and when he returned from New York, he was compelled to the settlement alluded to in the following letter,—the last of the Yvonnet correspondence:—

His last letter to Mr. Yvonnet.

TO JAMES LAWRENCE YVONNET.

NEW HAVEN, September 23, 1823.

DEAR SIR, —

Excuse me a short letter for this once. I am overhead in business now. I have a controversy with the bookseller Maltby, which is to go before arbitrators. I have not time to give you the particulars now, but he has borne very hard upon me. I write this letter simply to ask you to procure me all the subscribers you can for the edition of Wiley (now publishing, as our difficulties have been arranged), and to forward the names to me by the first opportunity. New Haven has really been searched for subscribers, and about sixty copies have been taken here. I wish you would do as well in Troy. I met, this summer, J. Yates of Schenectady, your classmate. He took a subscription paper, and I directed him to forward the names to Wiley. If you can see him or write to him, I wish you to beg him for my sake to forward them to me. I am particular in this request, both of you and him. Excuse the boldness of my mendacity, but you know there is one voice that cannot be resisted, — *dura paupertas*.

Yours,

J. G. PERCIVAL.

N. B. — I will write you fully when I get out of these troubled waters.

Just before the book was issued from the press, Mr. S. G. Goodrich, who was intending to spend some time in Europe, took with him the proof-sheets for republication in England, having in mind as a publisher the famous John Murray, "who,"

"Peter Parley" takes the proof-sheets to London.

so Wiley wrote to Percival, "appears to be a great admirer of your poems." The Canada, in which he sailed, had hardly weighed her anchor, when the Commercial Advertiser came out with the lines, "To the Canada on going to Sea," signed P., beginning,

"The gallant ship is out at sea,
Proudly o'er the water going."

Mr. Littell, the venerable editor of the Living Age, who had only a short time before offered to Percival the editorship of his Museum, also volunteered to assist him in the republication of his volume in England. Mr. Goodrich was not, however, successful in inducing Murray to take it. It was finally published by John Miller; but the volume had no circulation, and the publication was attended with a loss to the publisher of one hundred pounds sterling; and this, Mr. Miller adds, "In spite of ^{His poems} every exertion which has been used to get them ^{are unread.} into circulation." At the end of three years he writes, "I have nearly the whole impression on hand." The Monthly Review was the only periodical which ^{Criticism of} noticed the poems at all, and this only slight- ^{the Monthly} ^{Review.} ingly, in such terms as these: "Though not of equal excellence with the nobler strains of Bryant, or some of those of Bancroft, . . . they yet boast a degree of merit far superior to that of any entire pieces hitherto published on this [American] side of the water." It said: "The Doctor's poetry, though elevated with occasional bursts of true genius and passion, presents some of the most startling and terrific pictures of a powerful but fevered imagination, of contempt and hatred of mankind, of scepticism, of suicide, and of 'the darkest painter's horrors' that we recollect ever to have contemplated." It

pronounced his Prometheus "a poem abounding in splendid and fanciful passages." "A few other portions of the same poem, particularly in its descriptive parts, display much power and beauty: such as the delineation of an approaching tempest among the hills, which, for pervading strength and vividness, is almost worthy of the departed fire of Byron." It speaks of other poems "which, though not perfect in their kind, breathe an intense feeling and a mournful melody of soul that characterize only the true poet."

The publisher was now turned aside from proper attention to the volume by bankruptcy. A good deal of confusion arose; the subscribers were neglected; the books were delivered irregularly; and the actual income to Percival was small. The subscribers were mostly his acquaintances and friends; and beyond these almost no effort was made by the publisher to extend the sale of the book.





CHAPTER XI.

1823-1825.

PROFESSOR FOWLER'S LETTER. — HE ASSISTS HIM TO A PROFESSORSHIP AT WEST POINT. — IS DISAPPOINTED AND RESIGNS. — STATIONED AS UNITED STATES SURGEON IN BOSTON. — RETURNS TO LITERATURE. — HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH DR. HAYWARD.



AGAIN employ for a few pages the sketches furnished by Professor Fowler, who knew Percival more intimately than any one else at this time : —

When I was about to leave New Haven in 1823, with the expectation of spending a few months in Washington, Dr. Percival requested me to ^{Professor Fowler's} sketch. make some efforts to obtain for him a situation under the general government. This I assured him I would cheerfully do. Accordingly one day, after dining with Mr. Calhoun, in company with Mr. McDuffie, I broached the subject to them both. Mr. Calhoun very promptly said, "Would Dr. Percival like the position of Secretary of Legation? I think something can be found for him that will be satisfactory." It so happened that Dr. Lovell, the Surgeon-General, was almost a daily visitor, in a social way, at Mr. Hand's, my brother, with whom I was staying. He became interested in the case of Dr. Percival, and proposed that he should accept the office of surgeon in the army of the United States, with a view of acting

as Professor of Chemistry at West Point. Dr. Cutbush, the incumbent at West Point, having died just after this, Mr. Calhoun and Dr. Lovell both assured me that Dr. Percival should have the appointment, provided we obtained the recommendation of certain gentlemen in Connecticut, among whom were mentioned Governor Wolcott of Litchfield, and the Honorable H. W. Edwards of New Haven. Several letters passed between me and Dr. Percival on the subject of the appointment, in which he became greatly interested. The recommendations were obtained and forwarded. The following is an extract from a letter which I addressed to

Professor
Fowler
writes to
Percival.

Dr. Percival, dated Washington, November 25, 1823: "I am led to believe that it would not be difficult to obtain a situation that would be eligible, either here or at West Point. Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War, will do what he can for you, as will the Surgeon-General, Dr. Lovell. I believe that if you or your friends make application for you, you will be successful. Will you write to me soon on the subject? I see both of those gentlemen frequently, and to-morrow they will converse together on the subject. I wish your Poems were here. Do let me know what you are doing and what are your literary schemes, etc., etc. In what state of forwardness is your octavo volume?"

In reply I received the following letter:—

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

BERLIN, December 8, 1823.

DEAR SIR,—

I received your letter, dated Washington, November 25, 1823, Saturday evening. I am now here in retirement.

You know very well my difficulties and embarrassments last summer in New Haven. By my own exertion and that of my friends I have escaped from ^{His reply.} them, and am now even with the world. After seeing my octavo volume fairly before the public, I determined to retire here, where I can have the society of my books to satiety, but little of any other. I shall continue here till my circumstances are so ameliorated that I can venture forth to better advantage than I have yet done, or until something like the prospects you have presented to me call me forth. With regard to the prospects you hold out to me under government, I can say that I am much disposed to accept any eligible situation which may be offered me. It is not in my power to decide yet which of the two situations, Washington or West Point, I should prefer. It will be necessary for me to learn what places it may be in my power to obtain, before I can decide which of them I will venture on. I do not yet know the course which is taken by one who wishes a place under government. I conclude from what you say that application must be made by me or my friends. On all those doubtful points I shall wait for your instructions. Please write me soon, and give me what information is in your power respecting all the points you have hinted at in your letter, and concerning which I have here requested your advice. I have been so long without any adequate support or any permanent station in society, that I hardly know what to say to any proposal to engage at once in a responsible employment. Yet I am fully convinced that such an employment would be highly advantageous, if it is not necessary to me. You may take such measures as you may think most proper in my case; and when you have ascertained what can be done, if you will take the trouble to

write the result of your inquiries, you will much oblige me. There is one obligation which I meant to have discharged before you went Southward, but I could not see you in New Haven after Commencement. I was long on the watch for you, till I finally learned that you had gone. I shall discharge it as soon as I have an opportunity.

My octavo volume, as I have before hinted, is already published. If any could be disposed of in Washington by subscriptions on my account, perhaps I might supply them to my own advantage. Please to write me as soon as convenient.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

In a second letter, dated Washington, December 15, 1823, I said : —

“The object of the present letter is to ask you whether
Does Percival wish the appointment of Assistant Surgeon? you would be pleased with the appointment to the office of Assistant Surgeon in the army. You can have it if you choose. I am authorized to state that in case of your appointment, you can be retained at some agreeable station in the Atlantic States, unless you should *choose* to go to the Western frontier until there is a vacancy at West Point (which is constantly expected), which will give you the situation now occupied by Dr. Cutbush.

“This, I suppose, would be a very agreeable one to you, and sufficiently lucrative, and leading to something still higher.

“Of the high standing of West Point I need say nothing. When you go there it will be expected that you will deliver some lectures on Chemistry, for which you will receive an additional compensation. Until then

you will receive fifty-two dollars per month, eight dollars for horse, twelve dollars for servant, and three rations per day, — altogether making a handsome salary, to be increased when you go to West Point.

“The Surgeon-General, Dr. Lovell, whom I know very well as a man of genuine worth, and the Secretary of War, Mr. Calhoun, are both very much disposed to give you the appointment. Kindness of Dr. Lovell and Mr. Calhoun.

Applications are numerous, backed by powerful friends. Only a few days since, a gentleman with letters from some of the first men in the country was set aside on the expectation of giving the appointment to you. Since I first wrote, the vacancy has occurred, which, in the reduced number, is an uncommon thing. You have only to make the application, or let me make it for you, in order to receive the nomination of the Secretary of War, which will insure the office to you.

“Dr. Lovell told me that, for the satisfaction of the Senate, it would be well for you to present the recommendations of some of your friends in New Haven, — some of the officers of the Academic and Medical Colleges, and perhaps Mr. Bishop in regard to talents and integrity, — as a mere matter of form, and not as the ground of the appointment.

“When you take into view the situation at West Point, and the ease with which the appointment may be obtained, and the certainty of a genteel support, you had better weigh the matter well, even though at first you feel inclined to reject it. You ought, by all means, to converse with Professor Silliman about the situation at West Point. You will, I am sure, pardon this expression of my opinion, because in yours of the 8th you ask for my advice.

“Will you have the goodness to write immediately

after you have had time to make up your mind on the subject, as it will be difficult to keep the situation for you very long."

To this letter of mine he wrote the following reply. But before it was received I wrote to him, under date of December 23, 1823, that Dr. Lovell "has just informed me that Dr. Cutbush of West Point has died, and that the place is now open for you. And now, my dear sir, can you write immediately to let me know your wishes? There is a tide upon the affairs of men, etc. You place yourself in the line of promotion by accepting the situation, and you can, if you choose, resign it at any moment for something better."

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

BERLIN, December 25, 1823.

DEAR SIR,—

I wrote you immediately on receiving your former letters, and am sorry it had not reached you before you wrote me your second. I am altogether ready ^{He accepts the appointment.} and willing to take the appointment offered me. It is just what I want. I hope Mr. Calhoun will not lose his patience and give it to another. I am unwilling to let so good an opportunity slip through my hands unimproved. I am going down to New Haven next week, and will then procure and forward to you the recommendations needed. Mr. Silliman has already written to me, urging my acceptance. But I need no urging. I leave the matter with you only. I trust the next news I have from Washington will be the confirmation of my appointment. My situation here has occasioned some little de-

lay ; otherwise my former letters would have reached you sooner.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

To this I replied as follows : —

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1823.

DEAR SIR, —

Yours of the 25th was received this evening. Immediately on the death of Dr. Cutbush, application for the appointment was made in behalf of a gentleman who is very highly recommended. Mr. Calhoun and Dr. Lovell still adhere to their intention of nominating you. The nomination of course gives it to you, provided the Senate should be satisfied with the recommendations.

The Secretary of War wants no further evidence *himself*. But he wants the testimony of the respectable gentlemen of New Haven, and as many others of the State as you can conveniently obtain, in order to justify the appointment to the public. If you can obtain recommendations from the officers of the two Colleges, namely the Academic and the Medical, from respectable physicians and leading politicians, from Governor Wolcott, if convenient, you may be *sure* of having the appointment.

It is not required by Dr. Calhoun and Dr. Lovell ; but as a matter of courtesy it might be well to address a short letter to the Secretary of War, for the office of Surgeon at West Point. Professor Silliman is acquainted with such things. You can address it directly to him, or I will receive and deliver it.

Can you not send a copy of your select edition, and one of your Phi Beta Kappa Orations, as specimens? I will see Mr. Thompson, the bookseller.

Yours faithfully,

W. C. FOWLER.

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

NEW HAVEN, January 4, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

I received a letter from you this morning, and I hasten to answer you immediately. I have already written you two letters in answer to your former letters, immediately on the receipt of them. I am surprised and almost alarmed that you have not received them. I have there and do here not only freely accept the place offered me, but I urge you to make an immediate application in form, that there may be no chance of failure. I will myself, as soon as possible, collect all the recommendations desirable, and enclose them, with a direct application on my own part, to Mr. Calhoun. I have been all this time at Berlin, which, I think, must be the cause of all the delay in my letters, and have but just reached here. If I should lose the place by such delays, it would be a death-blow to me. Use your utmost to insure my success, and I shall always be obliged to you.

His anxiety
for the place.

Yours,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

It happened that after this I was absent from the city for a few weeks, and on my return I found that circumstances had occurred which had greatly endangered the

promised appointment. Other candidates had been brought forward, backed by a powerful influence. A day or two after my return, as I was walking up F Street, I saw the tall form of Mr. Calhoun on the other side of the street, moving in an opposite direction. As soon as he saw me, he came over to meet me in his delightful, cordial manner. As soon as the greetings were over, I alluded to the matter of the appointment. "O," said he, "things have changed since I saw you. I was not aware that the place would be so much ^{The appointment doubtful.} sought for. The New York delegation have brought forward Dr. Torrey, who is entirely qualified for the place. They insist that they have claims on the Department for the appointment, inasmuch as West Point is in their State." Then he paused, looking into my face searchingly. I simply replied, "Dr. Percival expects the appointment." Immediately he gave me the parting hand, asked me to call and see his family, and passed on, leaving me very much troubled about my friend Percival. Will Mr. Calhoun, who had the appointment in his hands, be true to his promise and to me, or will he yield to political expediency or what is called political necessity, on the deceptive basis of the "greater good"? A mere politician would yield, pleading a change of circumstances for the violation of his promise. Will ^{Will Mr. Calhoun keep his promise?} Mr. Calhoun? Will Mr. Calhoun value his promise to an obscure young man like me more than the popular favor of a strong delegation, like that of New York?

On my return I found the following letter from Dr. Percival:—

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

BERLIN, February 19, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

It is now several weeks since I have had any news from Washington. Dr. Lovell wrote me about the middle of January, promising that I should be nominated and that the appointment should take place the early part of this month. The month is now more than half passed away, and I have no news. Perhaps it may be only an unavoidable delay. If so, it would be a great relief to me to be informed of it by a short line. But if I am not written to because Mr. Calhoun has changed his views with regard to me, or because the appointment has been made and I have been unsuccessful, I am still more anxious to learn the results. I do not wish anything to be concealed from me. I have been waiting here several weeks solely for the decision of this question. My situation here is very unpleasant, and if I lose the appointment I must leave here immediately, and seek an employment which will furnish me at least the comforts of life. My funds are too small to allow of delay. It is for this reason more particularly that I am anxious to hear the results at Washington, favorable or unfavorable, as soon as may be, so that I may not be obliged to waste my time and money by any unnecessary delay. After what has already occurred, and since I have procured the very best recommendations Connecticut can afford, I feel almost a confidence that I shall not be neglected.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

A day or two after my interview with Mr. Calhoun I was greatly surprised by the arrival of Dr. Percival in Washington, his face instinct with emotion, and his language highly excited: "I could bear the suspense no longer." After tea, Dr. Lovell called upon him and took him to the President's house. About midnight I was surprised to see him enter my room with a candle, and approach my bedside. After an apology, he told me he could not sleep unless he informed me of what happened at the levee. "When Dr. Lovell introduced me to President Monroe as Dr. Percival, the President responded, 'Of West Point.' What did that mean?" I told him it meant that he would receive the appointment. "I thought so," said he, "but I could not sleep until I had told you." The next day his nomination, with And his appointment confirmed. others, was sent into the Senate and immediately confirmed. Mr. Calhoun had been true to his promise to me, although at the loss of political favor. The following evening we attended a small party at Dr. Lovell's, where we met Senator Lloyd of Massachusetts, and Mr. Rives, member of Congress from Virginia, and other gentlemen. Percival's poetical face created quite a sensation, especially among the ladies, before they knew who he was.

Percival was greatly disappointed at West Point, and wrote to me, requesting that I would intercede He is disappointed at West Point. for him at Washington, that he might be transferred to some other post. Very much to my mortification, I did so. He also wrote to the Surgeon-General to the same effect. He was accordingly transferred to Boston, much to his delight at first, though afterwards he requested me to aid him in obtaining a clerkship at Washington, instead of his position at Boston.

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

WEST POINT, May 5, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

I enclose you ten dollars in return for the sum I borrowed of you last summer. I regret that circumstances have so long prevented this payment, and I feel a great satisfaction in discharging this pecuniary debt. I have too many debts of friendship to pay you to think of discharging them so easily. I have this evening first sat down in my quarters. To tell you the plain truth, I am altogether dissatisfied with them. The beginning of new troubles. They are not equal to my rank. The other professors, who rank as majors, are quartered in separate elegant brick houses, and two of the French teachers, who rank as captains, are quartered in a very handsome double brick house, with entirely separate accommodations. My rank is between major and captain, and yet my quarters are below them all. I am thrust into the half of an old leaky, disjointed, smoky wood house, full of cracks and rats, with a common entry and staircase, so that it is impossible for me to enjoy the privacy and independence of a separate family. It is such a house as I would never think of putting a family in as long as I had as good means of supporting one as I otherwise have. However, I think of leaving it myself and taking rooms elsewhere. To speak truth, I am entirely dissatisfied here. My duties, instead of being light, as you represented them, now and then a lecture, are severe and constant,—one lecture every day for ten months in a year, the preparation of all the experiments, and the superintendence of the chemical recitations of the two upper classes. I offered last week

to instruct the first class in mineralogy. I accordingly received an order (everything is here *by order*) to give a lecture every other day, and the intermediate days to examine the class in two sections, each section an hour; so that I go over the same subject three times in succession. This I think you will say is drudgery. This is a fine way of encouraging American talent; there is no avoiding it. The orders are positive. This, too, is only one class. What will it be with two, and that ten months in the year? I told you my duties would be severe. You told me not to make them so; but I cannot avoid it. I am under a superintendent whose whole soul is wrapped up in preserving a severe discipline of conduct and studies. He regards me simply as a chemist. He knows nothing and cares nothing for my literary talents. All he expects of me is that I drudge faithfully in my duty.

Sir, it will never do. I am no chemist. I have attended lectures and read some. It is truth, I am no chemist. I never performed any experiments, and if I was left to myself, I could not for my life go through a course of lectures. With the best intentions He has been deceived. you have deceived me, and with the most innocent intentions I have deceived the government. But it is not too late to correct the evil. I hold the commission of Assistant Surgeon. I might be stationed as such in some point, and I should then lose only one hundred and twenty dollars a year, and while the difference in duty is five hundred dollars at least. You made me wrong representations. You represented the Surgeon's place as worth only eight hundred dollars, and this place twelve hundred dollars. This at furthest is only eleven hundred dollars, and the Surgeon's is nearly one thousand dollars. Now, if I could be situated permanently at some Northerly

Atlantic post, the duties would be comparatively trifling. They would be in the way of my profession, in which I would have long since engaged had it not been for the absolute want of funds. A continuance of the duties of surgeon two or three years would be improving me in practice, would enable me to lay by funds, and give me abundant leisure.

My duties here are monotonously severe. The employment is very unhealthy. I have no experience in it, and no inclination for it. It leaves little or no leisure. It compels me to change all my pursuits, in fact to revolutionize my mind; and for all this it gives me only one hundred and twenty dollars per annum. It is a pity I did not know this beforehand; but my ignorance was not my own fault. I followed the light that was held out to me. Now I am really strongly inclined to resign this place, and to ask for a garrison station as Surgeon. I want it permanent; but if that cannot be, I would rather be liable to change of quarters than attempt the Professorship of Chemistry here.

My inclination and my ambition are all literary. His ambition is literary, not scientific. What I have to spare from that, I would rather give to my profession. To tell you the truth, I hate chemistry, and the very thought of it gives me an ague. I have no notion of stifling myself with the stench and poison of a laboratory. If I can make this exchange, I shall not hesitate to accept it. If not, I shall drudge through one year, and then return to the ranks of my fellow-citizens; but I cannot do it now, for I am penniless; and about two years since I underwrote a brother one hundred dollars for a tailor's bill, to liberate him and assist him. He has gone off, and during my late visit to Connecticut I was arrested for the debt. I am now under bonds to

appear in court in August, — no escape from it. I have been entangled by my book. I must have my salary for a year, to clear out and have funds to start with. I did hope that I might find a place here where I could have leisure to pursue my favorite studies, to enlarge my literary powers, and to extend my reputation. I did hope that I should be so quartered that I could form a family of my own; and if circumstances permitted, I could find one who would be the idol of my temple: but I cannot toil like a mill-horse, and write poetry. ^{His duties too exacting for writing poetry.} I cannot invite one for whom I have any regard to such wretched quarters as I have all the time, above all, when they are but forty rods from nearly two thousand barrels of gunpowder.

My life has been a series of disappointments, and here comes the worst of all. I really do not like to negotiate this exchange myself, but I am very ^{His life a series of disappointments.} desirous it should be done. If you can make a statement of the circumstances to Dr. Lovell, you will much oblige me. If not, I must do it myself. I confess it, I am disappointed. I expect to feel the bitterness of it. If I leave here, I shall be reproached. If I stay here, I shall be disgraced, for I most assuredly must fail. I never can carry through a course of chemistry. I am no chemist. I never was one. I never wish to be one. But I have still some literary ambition, and I know where my talents are. Will you write me soon? If you can suggest anything, it will be very gratefully received. I know you never expected the reality of my situation, and when you come to know it, I do not believe you will urge me to continue.

Yours,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

N. B. — I will take no steps till I hear from you.

Immediately upon the receipt of this, I wrote to Dr. Lovell, requesting him to see Mr. Calhoun, and request him to comply with the wishes of Dr. Percival.

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

WEST POINT, May 24, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

I wrote you a few weeks since, enclosing you ten dollars in return for the sum I borrowed of you last summer. I directed the letter to New Haven. When I met you in New York, I wrote you on the subject of leaving my present station for the post of acting Surgeon. I wrote to Mr. Silliman. He answered me, entirely concurring in my views. I wrote also to Dr. Lovell, making a plain, unreserved statement of the whole affair. He complied with my wishes, and I am now relieved from the duties of acting Professor of Chemistry, or at least shall be in July, and shall then receive some appointment as acting Surgeon. I have requested to be stationed at Boston Harbor. I may not, however, be gratified in this request. The post at the arsenal of Watervliet is vacant. There are very few soldiers stationed there, perhaps not sufficient to warrant a separate surgeon. They have, however, had one there.

The business then is settled, and I congratulate myself on my good fortune. I could not have met with a severer disappointment than I did here. It made me for a few weeks perfectly wretched. You were entirely ignorant of the situation. You raised in me the falsest hopes, and led me into a situation from which I have escaped, though not without reproaches. The many will only know that

I have left the place. They will know nothing of the wherefore. They will therefore reproach me, and my reputation must suffer. Those who understand the whole circumstances will highly applaud me for what I have done. You may rest assured of it. You certainly did deceive me, but most innocently. You were yourself deceived, and that too by men whose intentions were of the best kind. They simply did not know the details of the duties of the place. I speak within bounds when I say that, for ten months in the year, my duties would employ me ten hours a day in severe labor and drudgery. I could not have endured it. One lecture a day, two recitations on each lecture, the preparation of the experiments, examinations, which during public examinations occupy ten hours a day. I believe Mr. Calhoun and Dr. Lovell meant to be generous. They did not mean to condemn me to such drudgery. It would have been no kindness if they had done it. There was no additional compensation to induce me. Only one hundred and twenty dollars per annum, the same a cadet receives for hearing the recitation of a single section, only twice the sum my own orderly or servant would receive! Such pay is an insult. In leaving this place, then, I only resign one hundred and twenty dollars; my pay is still over nine hundred dollars per annum. I am content with it, and trust I shall find the duties attached to it light; but if I do not, I can resign, and retire into the ranks of my fellow-citizens.

I have been disappointed. I have been exposed to a loss of reputation. And yet I believe you have had the very best intentions. I indulge no resentment. I regret that you were so hasty, that you were not better informed. I am sure if you had been, we should at once have agreed

that the surgeon's place was far preferable. I regret that I was so confiding, that I had not been so suspicious as to have learned exactly the nature of the situation before I approached it. If so, I should never have approached it.

Will you write me on receipt of this letter, and inform me whether you have received my former letters, with the enclosed ten dollars, to discharge the debts of one who had those claims upon me which are so often troublesome and rarely profitable to consanguinity?

Yours, etc.,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

P. S.—I have received a copy of the London edition of my poems. I confided it to S. G. Goodrich. He could not be satisfied without writing my life and praising me extravagantly in an Introduction, all well meant, but highly injurious* to me. I was in New York last week. I found that Wiley had again neglected to send my books to Washington. I saw them packed up, and wrote the directions with my own hand; but I warrant he never will send them.

In reply to this letter, I addressed one to him from Lebanon, Conn., in which I expressed my regrets for his disappointment at West Point, and my best wishes for his happiness, in the place he hoped to occupy in Boston.

* This is true. He had no such nice sense of propriety as Percival demanded, and his notice, it must be confessed, reads like an advertisement.

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

WEST POINT, June 12, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

I received your letter of the 6th this morning. If I used anything like reproach in my letters, I regret it. I have had several things to disturb me here. I have been deprived of my quarters, and obliged to pack my books, furniture, etc., in one little room, and find a lodging in another at the mess-house, a quarter of a mile distant, where I have been exposed to all the tumults of a hall, tavern, or family of children. All this I have been compelled to submit to by orders, to make room for a quartermaster. I regret to see the harsh tone you have assumed. Perhaps I had provoked it. However, I do not wish to quarrel with you. I believe you were actuated by the very best intentions; but we were neither of us sufficiently acquainted with the place here to judge aright. My necessities urged me to acceptance. I must say that Mr. Silliman urged me not to accept the appointment. He said its duties would be severe; and he did not think it wise or safe in me to assume the character of a chemist. He was right, and he has wholly approved my resolution to relinquish it.

My necessities were not last winter so great as you think. I owed nothing on my own account, ^{A personal review.} and did not expect any trouble from the debts of others. My dispute with Maltby was settled before, to my advantage. I was only not in a profitable employment, but I was quietly settled where I could write and study as much and as quietly as I chose. I had no Babel of noises to confound me, as I have had here. I

had been unsuccessful in my poetry, but it was partly my own fault. I had not consulted popularity. I had then resolved to change my course, and to write such as would take without compromising my reputation. I am not certain that I have gained anything for leaving that retirement. I know I have not yet. I have exposed myself to much obloquy. You reproach me. I see it very clearly. You think I have no stability. I shall not attempt to defend myself. I know the correctness of my own views and intentions. I know, or I am persuaded, that this relinquishment of my place here was one of the wisest acts of my life. I know I am justified by many highly respectable men who know my character and attainments and the real nature of the situation. I have settled the affair, I believe, to the satisfaction of Mr. Calhoun, at least I have been told so by good authority.

I know not yet where I shall be stationed as a surgeon, but wherever I am I shall make the best of it. I do not expect any great support for myself, at least till I can rid myself of my present most unjust embarrassments; for I have the satisfaction of reflecting that I have incurred no debts of my own. I have always lived within my income; I always shall. I did incur a slight debt by the unsuccessful publication of a volume, but I paid it seasonably and fairly; and now I am embarrassed somewhat by taking on myself the burdens of another. If that other had used me honorably, I should not have regarded it; but it does rouse me to find him concealing himself, and exposing me to a sheriff. I have said too much. I know very well that I have not followed money-getting prudence. I know I have little wealth and none of those family friends who are mutual supports to each

other. I am utterly and entirely alone. I am therefore in danger of cutting loose and suffering shipwreck. It is dangerous to live without a link to foster one. I must therefore devote myself more earnestly to my favorite pursuits. The love of study may fix me, but those studies must not be such as I hate. I must recover my lost ground in my profession, and the surgeon's place will be directly in the way of it. When I have obtained from the surplus of my pay enough to stand alone, then to be wise I must establish myself in my profession, and perhaps I may then be respectable. Let what will come, I will not abandon poetry. I have done too much to abandon it.

Appointed
Phi Beta
Kappa poet
at Harvard. I have just been appointed to deliver a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa at Cambridge, and I have engaged to attend.* Mr. Edward Everett will deliver the oration. This will bring me in contact with the only literary body in this country, and would to God it might lead to some permanent association. Not that I indulge in such a hope, but two hundred dollars among them would be better to me than one thousand here,—yes, two thousand. I do not want money so much as motives. When I have the mere necessities cared for, I prefer a surplus of such intellectual stuff as the society of Harvard or Boston would give to me, and which cannot be found in such a dull and noisy region as this. However, you may rest assured that I shall be prudent. I hope you will take care to get the letter I wrote you at New Haven.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

* He afterwards declined the appointment.

TO WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

BOSTON, January 20, 1825.

DEAR SIR,—

It is a long time since I have written to you. Perhaps you may have attributed this long silence to neglect and ingratitude. I have at least been very unhappy ever since my expectation was disappointed at West Point. It has been a killing stroke to me. I have in all the letters I have written to you on the subject endeavored to impress upon you my full conviction that your motives in all that affair were of the very best kind, but unfortunately we did not either of us understand the nature of the place at West Point; most unfortunately for me, for it has thrown me into a place here disagreeable in itself, and where my compensation is reduced more than half, without any chance of improvement. I have regretted, ever since I felt myself obliged to leave West Point, that

He regrets that he has not a clerkship at Washington. you had not at first directed the patronage which was granted me last winter to the situation of a clerk at Washington. In that we understood each other. I know it would be a place of considerable labor, but I was prepared for it, and was resolved to meet it; and now I should feel myself peculiarly fortunate if I could obtain a clerkship there on as good terms as I might have done last winter.

It was not so much the severe labor which rendered me dissatisfied with the place at West Point, as the necessity of actually engaging in a profession with which I had no practical acquaintance, and that too without any previous preparation; but it would not have been so with the clerkship at Washington. There would have been noth-

ing there which I might not have easily made myself familiar with ; and when I had once acquired the routine of the office, there would have been no difficulty but the time of labor. I am now convinced that this would have been rather an advantage to me than otherwise. It would have saved me from misery on the part of myself, and would have given an activity to my mind which I wholly lose here. I should have been better satisfied with myself, and the time I had left I should consider more my own than if nothing comparatively was required of me. My situation here is of that kind. I have a small salary, barely sufficient to support me, but my duties are very slight. I am chained here, with no opportunity of showing what I can do, unless I sit down to the writing of books, for which I have no courage or motive, since I have neither benefited my purse or any other interest of mine by those I have written. I came here unfortunately, and I have never yet been able to form any acquaintances here, or to appear as a literary man. I have no advantage of literary institutions, nothing that can excite or improve me, merely a dull and unprofitable leisure. Of course, I cannot be willing to continue here.

I have had encouragement in Philadelphia to expect considerable success, if I would engage in a school there, and rather than stay here in my present circumstances I would most willingly do so. I need some active employment. Here I stagnate and become miserable. My bad health adds to this, but is not alone sufficient. If I were satisfactorily employed, I should not feel it so much. But I do not wish to leave the employment of the government. I would rather continue in it, if I could secure an appointment

His situation
in Boston.

He is invited
to teach
school in
Philadel-
phia.

that would allow me to settle, and by a reasonable occupation, such as that of clerk, would give me a compensation beyond the bare supply of my own wants. I have no intentions of connecting myself in life, but I have ^{Has given up marriage.} a mother, who, I greatly fear, will need my assistance at some future period. As it is, I am extremely dissatisfied with my present situation, and I shall feel it my duty to exchange it for some one where I can be more fully and more profitably employed; and I would rather choose to leave here for such an employment as a clerkship than to leave all connection with the government.

Mr. Calhoun is, I am persuaded, friendly to me, but I have an unwillingness to bring myself too often before him. I wish to suggest to him and Dr. Lovell that I should think it a great favor to receive a clerkship at Washington. I wish to have the business opened to them from the beginning, and perhaps if they were acquainted with all the circumstances they would use their influence to procure me such a situation. You were successful in my cause last winter, and perhaps might be again, could you introduce the subject to Dr. Lovell in such a way as would be likely to meet a favorable consideration. I feel ill prepared to attempt it myself. You may have been dissatisfied with me; but if you knew my disappointment and suffering from it, I think you would pardon me.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

I wrote to Dr. Lovell as he desired. But the matter was not followed up, because he became gradually engrossed in certain literary engagements. It may not be improper for me to say that, in 1844, when Mr. Calhoun was Secretary of State, in conversation with

him, I alluded to the appointment of Dr. Percival, somewhat in the way of apology. "O," said he, ^{Mr. Calhoun's opinion of} "Dr. Percival was a poet, Dr. Percival was a poet," and immediately introduced another subject.

So far I have used Professor Fowler's communication. When the patronage of the government had been so suddenly taken away from him, his only income was from his pen; but this he kept constantly employed. ^{Attempts to abridge} One of his first labors was an attempt to abridge ^{Lempriere.} Lempriere's Classical Dictionary in ninety days. How well he succeeded is explained in the following letter:—

BOSTON, December 29, 1824.

DEAR SIR, —

Since I have been here I have been laboring constantly on Lempriere, but I find my progress less rapid than I had expected. In truth, I find it will be an excessively laborious task to accomplish in ninety days what I have engaged. Indeed, I do not think it would be at all in my power to effect. My health is really bad, and I have already applied myself too closely for my advantage. Besides, I find it extremely difficult to retain all the names and reduce the matter within the required compass. I believe in what I have already done I have overrun considerably.

This is a kind of work entirely new to me; and, considering the time and space allowed me to work up so large materials, I feel it most prudent for me to decline thus early. The engagement was formed too hastily on my part; and, considering the contingencies ^{Gives it up.} on which I can claim my compensation and the uncertainty of the same in amount, I had rather decline.

I have therefore returned the volume and the ten dollars you advanced me. If what I have already done can be of any service to you, I shall be gratified. I think it likely you may think strangely of this; but if you do, I cannot prevent it. In truth, I do not find myself capable of such severe literary labor as this task would require of me. If I could have my own time and space to work in, I should not object.

Yours,

J. G. PERCIVAL.

His support came mainly from his contributions, always A contributor to literary periodicals. acceptable, to different periodicals. In these he competed for the laurel-wreath with some of the chief names in American literature. Bryant and Percival were at this time the two leading contributors to the United States Literary Gazette, edited by Mr. J. G. Carter. In him Percival found a congenial companion and intimate friend. In one of his letters to the poet he thus alludes to the enlarged circulation of his poetry: "I have been gratified to see some of your pieces published in our Literary Gazette copied into the London Courier, the great organ of the Ministerial party." The other contributors of poetry were chiefly Longfellow, Dawes, and Mellen; and nearly all of them, living mainly by their wits, were also contributors to the Boston Spectator, then published by Mr. Charles G. Greene, who once told me that he used to have a poem from a prime poet in every number. It was a very interesting but short-lived weekly Review. Percival's genius and industry were now equal to the occasion, and he supplied his articles in prose and verse as fast as the printers could use them. He made an engagement to furnish an article every week

for the Evening Gazette; and he was also a regular contributor of poetry to the Portsmouth Journal. Nor this alone. In March, 1825, he engaged upon the revision of Knox's *Elegant Extracts*, and was frequently asked to contribute to souvenirs and annuals. At the same time he was negotiating with Mr. Cushing, President of Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia, who was desirous that he should accept a professorship of the languages in that institution; and so far had he gone in encouraging it, that the late Bishop Brownell gave him a letter to Dr. Moore, the Bishop of Virginia, to forward his plans. But finally he did not go.

His frequent and excellent communications to the Boston journals soon extended his reputation in that city; and though his own lodgings were humble, his poetical genius gained him an entrance to the refined and intellectual families in Boston. Dr. George Hayward and Professor George Ticknor became his faithful and intimate friends, and he found many a genial welcome, and these ever warmer and warmer the longer he stayed. He here made the acquaintance of the late Rufus Dawes, whose "*Spirit of Beauty*" shows him to have had a kindred nature. They used to be much together, and one day they went to Nahant to enjoy the delicious change of the cool breezes and wild, rocky, wave-beaten heights. In rambling about they entered a cave into which the waves came roaring and dashing with maddened fury. Both were excited, but Percival's feelings broke away beyond restraint, and, in the warm confidence of friendship, took the shape of wild and passionate impromptu poetry. Mr. Dawes described it to a friend as the most captivating enchantment he ever knew.

When, three years later, Dawes started a paper of his own in Baltimore, *The Emerald*, Percival was true to his old acquaintance, and sent him important poetical contributions.

The poet's eye was never closed to the charms of beauty in woman; and in the drawing-rooms of Boston he met a "lady of surpassing beauty," Miss Emily Marshall, who drew from him the following sonnet, an acrostic tribute:—

Sonnet to
a Boston
beauty.

"Earth holds no fairer, lovelier one than thou,
Maid of the laughing lip and frolic eye!
Innocence sits upon thy open brow,
Like a pure spirit in its native sky.
If ever beauty stole the heart away,
Enchantress! it would fly to meet thy smile;
Moments would seem by thee a summer day,
And all around thee an Elysian isle.
Roses are nothing to the maiden blush
Sent o'er thy cheek's soft ivory, and night
Has naught so dazzling in its world of light
As the dark rays that from thy lashes gush.
Love lurks amid thy silken curls, and lies
Like a keen archer in thy kindling eyes."

It gives me pleasure to continue these reminiscences of his residence in Boston, from the concluding part of Professor Fowler's letter, which has already supplied important links in this biography:—

Through the kindness of Dr. Hayward, just before his lamented death, I received by express forty-five letters written to him by Percival, chiefly on business. To these Dr. Hayward returned answers, which are among the letters left by Percival. In a letter to me, dated July 7, 1863, he informed me that their acquaintance began in the year 1825. He had previously read several pieces of poetry that had

How Dr.
Hayward
became
his friend.

appeared in the Charleston (S. C.) Courier. When he learned that Percival was in Boston, rather destitute, he sought an introduction to him, and found him in very humble lodgings, but no doubt the best that his means would allow. After a few interviews he invited him to his house. He at once accepted the invitation, and remained with him several days.

On further acquaintance he learned that his income was very small and precarious, depending in a great measure, if not entirely, on occasional contributions to two or three literary periodicals. He was desirous to obtain some more permanent employment, from which he would get a larger compensation. It was fortunately in the power of Dr. Hayward to aid him in this way. His friend, the late Honorable Samuel Walker of Roxbury, Mass., was desirous of publishing a new edition of Knox's *Elegant Extracts*, and wished to find a suitable person as editor.* He named Percival as exactly the man. An arrangement was made between the parties, but the compensation he offered was so large that Percival thought it would never be paid. Dr. Hayward mentioned this to Mr. Walker. He said at

Engages as
editor of
Knox's *Elegant Ex-
tracts*;

* His work was mainly to adapt the English edition to the American public; striking out much that was simply local to England, and inserting poetical and other selections from American literature. It was only at the urgent solicitation of the publisher that he was willing to insert any of his own poetry. These extracts were the early precursors of the literary cyclopædias which are so numerous in this generation; and I am sorry to add that this edition, on which Percival, amid other occupations, was engaged some eight months, and in which the publisher invested some two thousand dollars, fell almost dead from the press. The reason is not far to seek. It was published in six 8vo volumes, of four hundred pages each, without an item, save the names of authors, of the biographical information which now makes such works so popular and entertaining.

once that he would put the whole sum into Dr. Hayward's hands, who should pay for each volume as it was ready for the press. This was done, and the work was completed in a short time to the satisfaction of both parties; and Percival, for a very little labor and trouble, received probably a larger sum than he ever had before for his literary labors.

Soon after this Mr. Walker proposed to issue a new edition of Malte-Brun's Geography, and wished Also to edit Malte-Brun. Dr. Hayward to apply to Percival to be editor. He agreed to the proposition. The sum to be paid and the mode of payment were thought by him, as well as by Dr. Hayward, to be ample and liberal and in every way satisfactory. The labor, however, proved to be greater than was anticipated. The English copy from which this was to be printed was very badly translated; in that not only numerous corrections were to be made, but in several instances a new translation of many portions was to be given. It appears from some of the letters in my possession, already referred to, that Percival became very much dissatisfied, demanded a larger sum than had been agreed upon; and even after the work was partly printed, threatened to give up all connection with it. Dr. Hayward wrote to Percival pretty plainly on the subject, told him that he had expressed his entire satisfaction with the terms, that the additional labor he had voluntarily assumed, and that he was bound in honor to finish the work. He afterwards became more reasonable, and wished Dr. Hayward to say to Mr. Walker that he considered himself entitled to additional compensation. Though the sum he named was quite large, Mr. Walker at once complied; and his conduct throughout the whole affair was not only liberal, but highly honorable. Dr. Hayward

remarks, with great propriety: "This edition of Malte-Brun is, in my opinion, superior to any in the language."

Besides this, Percival had a plan for publishing a periodical in Boston, that was to be issued once a week. He published a prospectus* that had a wide circulation. Dr. Hayward made an arrangement with a responsible publisher, who offered to print and distribute it, collect the subscriptions, subject the editor to no expense or liability, and give him one half the profits,—the account-books to be open at all times for his inspection. A large subscription was obtained; and when his friends supposed that the first number would soon appear, he declined having anything further to do with it, without assigning any reason; and the whole plan was necessarily abandoned.

Another thing troubled him, and he wrote to Dr. Hayward to settle it for him as best he could. He had been a contributor for some time to the Evening Gazette of Boston, and was paid liberally, especially as the articles were for the most part hasty effusions, by no means worthy of him. In his letters to Dr. Hayward he wished to give up the contract, without saying

* The paper was to be issued in weekly numbers of eight octavo pages, on good paper, and in handsome type. It was to cost three dollars a year, and to consist entirely of original articles. Percival sent out the following prospectus:—

"The Paper will consist of MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES, ESSAYS, NARRATIVES, CRITICISMS, etc.,—whatever may be interesting to the reading public. It is not my intention to confine myself within any narrow limits, but to give myself 'verge enough' to introduce any subject on which a thinking man may write or a reflecting man may read. Simply, my object is to establish a literary paper of my own. Its progress will depend entirely on the prospect of sufficient patronage to warrant me in undertaking it.

"J. G. PERCIVAL."

why. This Dr. Hayward found would not do; and he would not have been able to do it, if Mr. Clapp, the proprietor of the paper, had not behaved in the most kind and liberal manner. "He seemed to think," says Dr. Hayward, "that any contract he made was only binding on the party with whom he made it, but not on himself. He knew less of business affairs than any man I ever met, and was suspicious that those with whom he dealt wished to overreach him." This remark coincides entirely with my own opinion.

There was another affair mentioned in the letters that for a time annoyed him not a little. He delivered a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of New Haven, but found no one willing to purchase the copy and print it. He wrote to Dr. Hayward that he had applied to several publishers in New York and New Haven, without success. Dr. Hayward advised him to bring the manuscript to Boston, and intimated that something might probably be done for him there. He did so. He named the sum for which he was willing to sell it. None of the booksellers were inclined to purchase it. In conversation with a few of his friends, it was arranged to give him something more than he had asked for the copy, print it, give him as many copies as he wished, and tell him that they had disposed of it. This was done; and he never knew that it was not disposed of to some publisher in Boston. "The poem," Dr. Hayward remarks, "though of great poetical merit, was not popular, and but few copies were sold."

Dr. Hayward further says in his letter to me: "I saw but little of him after he entered on his Geological Survey of Connecticut, nor did he write me very often. But I know enough from my pre-

Dr. Hay-
ward's gen-
eral estimate
of him.

vious intimacy with him to be satisfied of his entire purity of character, and that his literary and scientific attainments were greater than those of any man I ever knew. His knowledge of languages was almost equal to that of Cardinal Mezzofanti; and his Geological Survey, Professor Silliman told me, was the most able that had been made in our own country.

“Though he did not talk often with me on religious subjects, I feel very sure that he was a firm believer in the Gospel of our Saviour. But he often expressed to me an utter disgust for every form of fanaticism, bigotry, and intolerance.”

During the time covered by these letters, reaching from 1825 to 1834, I frequently saw Percival, especially while he was engaged upon the Dictionary. Indeed, at the request of Dr. Webster, I conversed with him on the difficulties he experienced in correcting that work. He always met me with great cordiality, was generally frank and communicative, but sometimes reticent and moody. Everything in the correspondence, as well as in my own knowledge of the facts, combines to show that he was under great obligations to Dr. Hayward, who treated him with much kindness and forbearance, and who, while he appreciated his high qualities and aided in their development, also understood thoroughly his weakness, and with a firm but gentle hand imparted strength to him for the performance of life's duties.

Percival's mistakes in life arose out of his excessive sensibility. To use his own language, his agony was the rack of hell, his joy the thrill of heaven. He felt deeply the annoyances of practical life. His agony or his joy would sometimes throw him off the track. But it should be remembered that he had to contend with

poverty, ill health, and depression, and that, notwithstanding his sensibility, he often did continue to move on the track of duty, even when the grades were high, and the curves sharp, and the road-bed uneven.

It has not been my purpose to analyze his mind, to exhibit his character, but only to present certain passages in his life which fell under my own observation. I have many additional facts and incidents which my limits will not allow me to introduce in this letter. I feel much tenderness for the memory of Percival, and respect and admiration for his various talents, and confidence in his moral purposes. His peculiarities have, in the spirit of the times, been caricatured, while the traits which he had in common with other superior men have been ignored. He united great intellectual power in the investigation of science and great knowledge of the languages with "the vision and faculty divine"; so that he was at once philosopher, philologist, and poet. He was conscious of his own strength and his own weakness.

"There is a middle place between the strong
And vigorous mind a Newton had,
And the wild ravings of insanity,
Where fancy sparkles with unwearied light,
Where memory's scope is boundless, and the fire
Of passion kindles to a wasting flame;
But will is weak, and judgment void of power.
Such was the place I had."

WILLIAM C. FOWLER.





CHAPTER XII.

1825, 1826.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. HAYWARD. — AN EDITOR IN NEW YORK. — HIS PHI BETA KAPPA POEM AT YALE. — HOW FAR PATRONIZED BY THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT. — THE PREY OF NEWSPAPER SCRIBBLERS. — HIS POEM PUBLISHED IN BOSTON.

IN June, 1825, he removed from Boston to his native place, where, amid some unanticipated obstacles to his quietness, he continued his literary labors. He then began the following correspondence : —

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, August 8, 1825.

When I left Boston I had calculated on receiving such a sum from Carter and Clapp, for my communications to them, as would have made my residence here safe and agreeable. I have nothing to complain of Carter. He has faithfully kept his word. My agreement with Clapp (not written, but simply verbal) was, that I should send him an article weekly, which he was to publish and pay me five dollars for, — at the rate of a shilling a line for thirty lines. If my articles were longer, they were to be rated at thirty lines. I sent him my communications regularly till I found he would not

His correspondence
with Dr.
Hayward.

publish them. In nine weeks he has published but four articles. I know not what could induce him to do this, unless my very civilly requesting him to forbear from remarking upon me. I did so from his having inserted a puff immediately after my leaving Boston. I requested him to forbear, and the next week he published the substance of my request. I have repeated my request. While I was harassed in this way by Clapp, I received a letter from a young man in New York, George Bond, offering me the editorship of a paper he had just established in New York, with a salary of one thousand dollars per annum. I have been to New York since I received your letter, but have again returned here. I shall, if possible, keep my ground here until I can regain a better state of health than what I have now. I find that I cannot live in a city. Somehow I become wretched after entering one. I cannot control my feelings. Indeed, there is no safety for me unless in the country.

He accepts
the editor-
ship of the
Athenæum.

I wish, if possible, to renew my arrangement with Clapp. He must have understood me, I am sure, when we last had a conversation on the subject. If he will observe his part of the agreement, he need not fear that I shall neglect mine. If, however, he is not an honorable man, I am willing to dissolve all connection with him. His neglect to observe our arrangement, at least as I understood it, has led me into a very unfortunate step, from which I fear I am not yet extricated. I have not yet completed Walker's book, owing to the unsettled state in which I have been. But I shall immediately apply myself to it, and arrange it as soon as I can.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, August 20, 1825.

I shall feel much obliged if you can arrange the settlement with Walker, without the necessity of my visiting Boston. However much I might be gratified by visiting you (and I assure you I should be highly so), I feel obliged to deny myself. I would willingly live entirely secluded for not a little time. I hear the newspapers are making game of me, though I have seen none of them. I trust your opinion of me will not be altered by their defamation. I shall try to disregard them. . . .

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, September 1, 1825.

I have been delayed in the preparation of his [Walker's] book by an unfortunate circumstance. The physician of the place died about two weeks since; and I have been compelled, against my wishes and in spite of my refusal, to attend some patients. I have thus lost several days, and may not be ready with his book till October; but I shall not delay it unnecessarily. I have been appointed to deliver a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa at New Haven, and am resolved to appear there, particularly as so many liberties are now taken with me by newspaper scribblers.

He accepts
the appoint-
ment of Phi
Beta Kappa
poet at Yale,

You have requested an explanation of my unfortunate affair with Bond in New York. When I came here, I relied on receiving five dollars a week from Clapp. When I found he neglected insert-
ing my articles, and took unaccountable liberties with my

And explains
his sudden
movements
in New York.

name, in his paper, you may judge of my chagrin. I have been from the first and am still very disagreeably situated here; certain domestic difficulties have contributed not a little to my uneasiness; but these I cannot detail. In this state of things I received the first note from Bond. He offered me one thousand dollars per annum for the editing of his paper, a weekly one of eight pages; and at the same time stated that he wished me, on account of my reputation, to establish his paper. I saw that his motives were entirely mercenary, and I replied that I did not wish to engage in such an employment, unless I could have a permanent interest in it. He referred me for a character to Wilder and Campbell, respectable booksellers in New York. After some delay, they answered me that they had never seen nor even heard of Bond, that they knew nothing of him, that they had inquired, but could gain no information, and that they thought it strange he should refer me to them. I then wrote to Stone, editor of the Commercial Advertiser, requesting information, and at the same time stating to him that I did not wish to engage unless the situation was permanent. He wrote me that he had learned that Bond's character and circumstances were good, and advised me to accept. I replied that I would do so, if Bond would guarantee me a year's salary in case of his failure to continue before the agreement had expired, and that I did not wish to engage, if I did so at all, for less than two or three years. He wrote me that he had told Bond that his offers were accepted by me, but that he said nothing to him of the time or the guarantee, nor could he do so. He stated that a Mr. D. Fountain, of whom he spoke in high terms, had highly recommended Bond to him, and that I must accept, if I did so, immediately. I had informed my mother

of the affair, and she was urgent on me to accept it. I told her it would not be wise to accept it without a guaranty, and that I did not wish to do so without one. When Stone's last reply came, she still urged me, and in an unfortunate moment I consented and went on to New York. When arrived, I called on Stone, and was introduced by him to Bond. I demanded a contract for two years, without reserve. After a delay of nearly a week, a contract was shown me for two years, unless Bond should find it necessary to suspend it sooner. In an unguarded moment I signed it. In fact, I felt committed. I had been disappointed by Clapp; I was very uncomfortable at Berlin; I knew hardly where to turn. I acted blindly, I allow, and have suffered for it. After I was secured, Bond informed me he had concluded to enlarge his paper to twelve pages weekly, instead of eight. The first week after my arrival he did not wish me to engage in the paper. I simply announced myself as editor. The paper came out, and I found a scurrilous attack on the Literary Gazette, in which Bond knew I was engaged. I remonstrated plainly, and showed him how much I felt it an ungenerous attack on my feelings. He excused himself by his obligations to a correspondent who had furnished it, though I still think his object was to force me to a rupture with the Gazette. I found now that Bond, in addition to his great youth, — I should not think him twenty-two, — was without firmness or independence at least, and I could not abandon all other resources and throw myself entirely on his mercy. I became miserable and immediately retired. I wrote him a confidential letter, which he has published, not entire, but garbled so as to suit his purpose. He has thus made me speak the language of unqualified self-condemnation, which is not

to be found in the original. There are various things in the published letter not in the original.*

Such are the facts of the case, I believe, faithfully stated. I leave the decision to you. I was very careful to do nothing to injure Bond, and for that reason I wrote so frank and confidential a letter. Stone has stated one thing in his remarks which may lead to a mistake. He said Bond took a room for me. Bond made inquiries, but I took the room and paid for it myself in advance. He cannot say that I have caused him directly the loss of a cent.

I have observed a very impertinent article in the Portland Argus, perhaps from the same fellow who took such

* The following is the published and garbled letter:—

NEW YORK, August 6, 1825.

SIR,—

I scarcely know how to introduce the subject of this note to you. I feel entangled in one of the most disagreeable dilemmas in which I ever found myself. But to be brief, I find myself under the necessity of returning the contract. This depends so much on circumstances which I cannot well explain, that I can hardly hope to make myself intelligible to you. A principal reason is my health. I had retired into the country on account of it before you wrote to me, and I now find that on that account alone, I have done very wrong in engaging in this affair. I am persuaded that, should I continue in it, I should neither do you any service nor myself any credit. I shall suffer much as it is, but I know not that I can do anything better than make an immediate retreat. I know I lay myself open to you. I shall be very sorry to do you an injury. I feel sensible, too, that this closes the way on me to all similar offers in future; but yet I cannot see any safer step than for me to retire at once. I give you my assurance that I have not intended in any respect to injure or deceive you: what I did, I meant in good faith. I have been without decision, and my coming here is one of the worst instances of it. I cannot continue on such a subject.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

MR. GEORGE BOND.

liberties with me in Boston last spring. I should not notice it, but for the falsehood it contains. He says I have been patronized by the people and the government, that the government gave me the place at West Point, which I left after a few weeks, and then supplied me with a very desirable place in the Navy-Yard at Charlestown, which I also ran away from, all from caprice. As for the patronage of the people, the facts are ^{How he was patronized by the people,} these. I was prevented by very unfortunate circumstances from engaging in my profession for eighteen months after I took my degree of M. D. Wearied with delay, I published my first volume of poems at my own expense, two hundred and thirty dollars, and advanced money for it. I lost money by it. I published the second volume on a contract. I never have been able to effect a settlement. I have received for it thirty dollars and a few copies. For the third volume, which I sold out in advance, I received one hundred and twenty dollars. The fourth volume I published at my own expense. It cost me about one hundred and fifty dollars. Almost the whole edition remains on my hands unsold. I have lost money by it. The new edition selected from all these, published by Wiley on contract, I have never yet effected a settlement on. I have received only copies which I have disposed of to my particular friends, and sixty dollars, which I was obliged to expend while preparing the edition and superintending the press. You see from this that it is perfectly ridiculous to say I have been patronized by the American people. I have received marks of kindness from my friends in Boston, but this does not constitute the American people. However great the wishes of these friends, their means of patronage have been limited. I feel the highest gratitude to them for what

they have done, but none to the people. All the patronage I have received from them was to be damned by the praise of newspapers, or to be seduced from more profitable employment by the commendation I received, and thus involved in difficulties; and when thus involved, to be insulted by the talk of patronage! I know what is patronage, and I know I have never been patronized by the people. All I have ever received from the sale of my poems has been insufficient to meet my most stinted wants. I have never been extravagant.

As for the patronage of the government, it is simply this. And by the government. I had edited a newspaper devoted to Mr. Calhoun. A friend of mine, happening in Washington, was introduced to Mr. Calhoun, and turning the conversation on this subject, succeeded in interesting him in me. He then wrote me that he was authorized to offer me the place I had at West Point, that it was a place of slight duties, great leisure, and just the place I wanted for my literary pursuits. He hinted that it would be an acceptable return, if I would use my pen in the cause of Mr. Calhoun. This between us. I wrote that I would accept the place if it was such, and distinctly stated that I was very desirous of a situation where I could continue my literary pursuits undisturbed (they were then my only ambition), but that I was ill calculated to fill a chair of chemistry, as I had never been employed in a laboratory, and had no practice in experimenting. This I was assured would be no obstacle. I was appointed, and went to West Point, and then for the first time learned the real duties of the place. They required constant and severe labor for ten months in a year. No time for preparation was allowed me. I saw that I must abandon the place, or abandon my literary pursuits, or do

the greatest violence to my feelings. I consulted some of the first gentlemen in the country and the officers in the Academy on the subject, and they all pronounced it a mistake, and recommended me to resign. I made a full and frank statement to Mr. Calhoun, and tendered my resignation. He expressed himself perfectly satisfied, and received it. He then offered me the choice of retaining my commission of Surgeon in the army, subject to perpetual change of place according to orders, or if I wished a permanent situation, to resign my commission and take the situation of critical inspector of recruits at Boston, employed on contract. I was assured I might rely on the permanence of the situation. I resigned my commission, and accepted the place at Boston. I thus gave up a permanent leisure and one half my salary for a fixed residence. I was at considerable trouble and expense in removing to Boston. While on a salary of five hundred dollars, I was obliged to be in constant waiting, to strip and examine all the vagabonds they chose to bring me. I had just settled myself in Boston, when, in the middle of a Northern winter, the government abolished the recruiting establishment, dismissed me without a moment's warning or a word of explanation, and left me without resources among strangers. I have heard nothing from them since. So much for the patronage of the government. I do not feel toward it a very burdensome debt of gratitude. I have been assured from high authority that it was the general understanding at Washington, that in giving me the place at West Point, they were giving me a place where my poetical talents might have full leisure and free space to expatiate. I certainly had great expectations raised. Hence you may judge of my disappointment when I found the truth. I resigned the

place with the advice and sanction of Mr. Silliman and Professor Kingsley of New Haven, Colonel Dwight of Stockbridge, and Lieutenant-Governor Tallmadge of New York, among others. I write these full statements of public patronage for you to make corrections. You are at liberty to do so through the medium of Mr. Hale's paper.

N. B. — I forgot to state that I found D. Fountain was Bond's printer.

To this Dr. Hayward thus replied : —

Boston, September 20, 1825.

DEAR DOCTOR, —

I received your letter some time since, containing an account of the New York affair, and am rejoiced to find that you had such good reasons for adopting the course you did in relation to Bond. In a strict legal sense, the contract was perhaps obligatory ; but after the appearance of the offensive article in his paper, the intention to enlarge Dr. Hayward it, etc., etc., I do not think it was morally so. helps to re- I consulted Mr. Hale respecting some public slander against him. statement in relation to you ; and we thought it best to have it done in an editorial article, as such a one would carry with it more weight than anything from an anonymous correspondent. He has delayed doing it merely till he could hear of your having delivered the Φ B K poem, and intends to avail himself of the occasion when he announces that fact. We thought this would be better than to do it in a more formal way, as nothing has of late been said in the paper which has come to our knowledge. It is very singular that Mr. Hale has as yet received no paper from New Haven mentioning the

Φ B K celebration, though the fact that you delivered the poem is stated in the Boston Patriot to-day. . . .

GEORGE HAYWARD.

The editorial of Mr. Hale, which appeared two days later in the Advertiser, using the facts contained in Percival's recent letter, did much to correct the mistaken impressions which had got abroad concerning him, and was at once kind and just. A few words from it are interesting, as showing how aptly Mr. Hale repelled the assaults, without wounding the feelings of the poet.

"DR. PERCIVAL. — We have been sorry to see the freedom with which this gentleman has been brought before the public. At one time he has been represented as an object of charity, and pining in obscurity for want of notice and patronage; at another, as a person on whom the patronage of the government and of the people has been extravagantly bestowed; and again, as a person not in his right mind. These publications have tended to give a very false impression of his situation and his character; and it is easy to imagine, that, to a person of retired habits and disposition, and of a nice sense of character, they must have given great pain. He has done nothing to justify the exposure of his private concerns before the public, even if it had been done fairly; much less has he done anything to provoke the extravagant and unfounded representations to which we allude. In becoming an author, he threw his works before the public, to be dealt with as they should see fit; but for himself, it must be evident, to every one acquainted with his character, that his greatest desire is to live retired from the public gaze. He is able and willing to earn an honorable support by his talents and industry; for

he is distinguished not only for his fine taste and poetical genius, but for his varied acquirements, particularly in several branches of science; and they have greatly mistaken his situation and his wishes, who have presented any claims in his favor not founded on his actual services. On the other hand, there has been nothing to be envied in the liberality of the patronage which has been bestowed upon him."

In quite a different tone is the following taken from the Connecticut Herald of September 20, 1825. Percival was always unfortunate in his delivery; but this, and the added notice cut from the letter of a New Haven correspondent of the Boston Centinel, betray almost a personal venom and spite. The wonder is that he could have appeared in public at all, when his private life had been so ruthlessly exposed to a morbid curiosity:—

"It appears by the report of the proceedings of the Phi Beta Kappa Society that the poem of Dr. Percival fully sustained 'the high reputation he has already acquired.' Whether the observation is intended to apply to his 'high reputation' for taciturnity, moroseness, contempt of propriety and of public opinion, or to his character as a scholar and a gentleman, we cannot say; but we can say, that any person was singularly fortunate who could discover from the delivery of the poem that it had any character at all. Not one word of it was heard by most of the audience; and we believe few individuals heard enough of it to determine either the nature, scope, or subject of the poem. It was hurried over with all the volubility his tongue was master of, apparently without the least regard to emphasis, cadence, or perspicuity, and this obviously designed. The difference between this attempt of Dr. Percival and that of last year

Comments
on the de-
livery of his
poem.

before the Harvard Society is, that in the first case he ran away from his audience, and in the second the audience ran away from him."

The implication in this last sentence, that he ran away from his audience, is hardly true. He had been appointed in May, 1824, to deliver the poem at the meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard University in the following August, when Edward Everett was to deliver the oration.* He returned a favorable answer. But after waiting some time, he sent the member of the Society's committee appointed to confer with him the following letter, declining the appointment.

TO G. MOREY, JR.

July 24, 1824.

SIR, —

I am unwilling that the Φ β κ Society should be disappointed by the encouragement I gave them of appearing at the anniversary in August, and yet the circumstances under which I have been, He declines the Harvard Phi Beta appointment. and am now, placed render me equally unwilling to appear there. I presume, by your letter, that you are anxious that the place should be filled by some one. If it be not too late to supply my place, it will give me no little satisfaction; for it is really altogether against my present wishes to appear before the Society. I would have done this earlier, but it is now only a few days since I have

* He had a future opportunity, which he improved, of acting his part in the same scene with Mr. Everett. It was at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Lexington, at Concord, Mass., April 19, 1825, when Mr. Everett delivered the oration and Percival furnished the ode, though it is not certain that he was present in person.

been in a situation to decide, and I have taken the first opportunity to give you this notice.

Yours, etc.,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

12 Chambers Street, Boston.

He thus missed, perhaps, the most cultured audience What he lost by it. and the finest opportunity to enlarge his reputation then to be found in our country. The New Haven correspondent of the Boston Centinel wrote thus : —

Another correspondent. “You will doubtless desire to hear how our eccentric and bashful friend Percival succeeded in his Phi Beta Kappa poem. We found much difficulty in getting the Doctor into the desk. He positively refused to proceed, declaring the audience already to have been satiated with literary food; and some compulsion was necessary to urge him on. At length he made his appearance, and every exertion was made to encourage him. But all was in vain. He commenced and hurried over something, but what not ten persons in the house could hear or understand, delivered in a key evidently pitched so low as not to be audible. It certainly was

‘The story of the bear and fiddle, —
Begun and broke off in the middle.’

Better things were expected of him by some of us, as it was a voluntary offering on his part. Had he been chosen to the part, a disappointment might have been anticipated. But he was a volunteer, and an exertion was expected from him to regain lost ground. The scene, however, was a laughable one; and he has had sense enough to see the point of the allusion in one of the toasts, —

‘ *Strange* that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune *so long*. ’ ”

The toast was offered by “a facetious ex-Governor of Connecticut,” the Honorable Charles H. Pond. An extract from a letter dated New Haven, October 1, 1825, and written to Percival by his friend, the late Dr. Charles Hooker, explains the cause of much of the hostility now shown to him :—

“Judge Gould’s oration is now in the press ; and it would be well to have your poem come out about the same time with that. You have probably The hostility to him explained. learned before this that it was Woodward, and not Converse, that came out upon you. He last week copied a little paragraph from the Boston Centinel, purporting to be a letter from New Haven, stating that your poem was a *voluntary* offering, and that Mr. Pond’s toast had a sarcastic allusion, etc. Mr. Twining told me to-day that he should hand an article to Woodward, correcting his misrepresentations. Mr. Twining does this at the request of Judge Gould, who is much offended at the course Woodward has taken. The general remark with regard to Woodward’s asperity is, that it *all arises from a private pique*, the cause of which is pretty generally known. Mr. Pond has requested me to state, through the medium of some paper, that nothing was more remote from his mind than any sarcastic allusion, and that he regrets the jealousy which should give his sentiment such a construction. Mr. Hale, of the Boston Daily Advertiser, has come out with a very handsome article in opposition to the misrepresentations which have been made concerning you in some papers. . . . You will not, I am sure, in the long run, receive any disadvantage from the calumnies which have been aimed at you. You have taken the wisest course, — to be silent with regard to them.”

In a letter written a few weeks later, Dr. Hooker soothes the wounded feelings of the poet with this cheering news: "Be assured the general feeling of the public is altogether in your favor, and the cause of the asperity which has been shown by a few editors is well understood. You have many warm friends in this town [New Haven], who frequently inquire concerning you." To show that the poem was not a voluntary offering, I have before me the letter written to him by the Secretary of the Society, in which he says: "The Phi Beta Kappa Society at a late meeting appointed you to deliver a poem at the ensuing Commencement. . . . The Society are anxious to avail themselves of your poetical talents, and hope you have something on hand which, without material change, will be adapted to the occasion." Dr. Hayward adds a word in a letter dated, Boston, October 24, 1825, concerning the public feeling towards him: "The editorial remarks of Mr. Hale, and the extract which he made from a New Haven paper, have removed, if there existed, any unfavorable impressions from the minds of all whose opinions would be of the slightest value."

In a letter from Dr. Hayward, dated September 22, 1825, there occurs the following passage, relating to a settlement in Cambridge already proposed by Dr. Gilman, and to his recent poem:—

"It has occurred to me that you would find Cambridge a pleasant place of residence. You could board in the house in the Botanic Garden, in company with Mr. Nuttall, or you could take lodgings in any place you pleased and board in commons, so that your expenses would be as moderate, probably, as anywhere in the country; while you could enjoy as much

He is set
right again
with the
public.
Mr. Hayward
urges him to
settle in
Cambridge.

or as little literary society as you wanted, attend such lectures as you chose to, and have free access to the College Library. Perhaps I am a little selfish in this, knowing that your removal there would bring you nearer to town, and of course give me an opportunity of occasionally enjoying the pleasure of your society, the deprivation of which I have felt very sensibly. I hope you will think of this, and I will ascertain everything for you in relation to the expense you may desire to know, if you should request it. I am rejoiced that you delivered your poem at New Haven. I feel very desirous to see it, and I hope you have made no arrangements there that will prevent us from publishing it here. I speak merely on your account, for the credit will equally belong to that institution whether the poem is published here or there; but I think more purchasers will be found here. Your poetry is nowhere better relished or more highly appreciated than in Boston. You was very respectfully noticed in a toast at our Φ B K celebration, which I afterwards learned was from the Rev. Mr. Ware,* who, by the way, is a great admirer of yours.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

HARTFORD, October 8, 1825.

I have at last completed the Extracts, and with no little satisfaction. It is not a task I wish to repeat, although I am perfectly satisfied with the compensation I receive. The English edition was not satisfactory to me. I did not like the selection, and thought it an unfortunate basis to bring out an edition on; but I have done with it as well

* The Rev. Henry Ware, Jr.

as I could under such circumstances. I hope Walker will be satisfied with it, and that there will be no difficulty on the subject between him and me. . . . I have reflected further on your proposal to settle in Cambridge.

Declines to go to Cambridge, and fears he must give up literature. I think it will not be wise. If I were contented to rely on my pen, I am persuaded there is no other place in America where I could do it with

any safety but in the vicinity of Boston; but I am quite convinced that if I wish ever to feel anything like security and independence, it will be necessary for me to abandon my pen altogether. I am serious in this. I did hope that I should realize something better from my literary reputation than I have yet realized or have any prospect of realizing; but I have no longer any such hopes. I thought last spring, that, if I could settle myself in the country on such an income as I thought I might have from my contributions to periodicals in Boston, that I might live pleasantly and respectably, but I have been hitherto quite disappointed. I went to Berlin because it was my native place, and because I had connections there; but as yet I have found nothing but disquiet and mortification. My prospects there I cannot say are much improved. I do not yet abandon all hopes of accomplishing the object for which I went there, nor do I wish to leave there till I have made a further trial. If I leave there, I said in my former letter, perhaps foolishly or at best unwisely, that I did not wish to do it unless on an expedition of profit or fame. I should not go anywhere in search of fame unless to Europe, and for that I do not feel prepared. The public feeling toward me here is so poisoned, that if I should write better than poet ever did, it would avail me nothing. If I go in search of profit, I think I must engage as a teacher in some classical school. I look to

that as my last resort. I have no wish to have any further dealings directly with printers, booksellers, or publishers, in any shape. I have not prepared my poem yet for the press. If I do, I am inclined to send it to you to be published in Boston, if you can find one to undertake it there on favorable terms for me. . . .

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

HARTFORD, October 13, 1825.

I am at present engaged on a short task for Mr. Goodrich,* now in Boston. When that is completed, ^{About his} I will apply myself to my poem, and transmit ^{poem.} it to you, if I can satisfy myself with its execution. It at present needs some improvement. I am, however, inclined to publish it. . . .

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, November 7, 1825.

I have delayed answering your letter a few days, from the uncertainty of my situation at the time I received it. A proposition was made me which I will com- ^{A proposition} municate to you *sub rosa*. It was proposed that ^{to travel in} Europe. I should go out to Europe on the following conditions. Eight hundred dollars to be advanced me for my passage and the British Islands, in which I was to spend six months, and send home my journal of at least six hundred such pages as the North American, though eight hundred

* The late Hon. S. G. Goodrich, well known as "Peter Parley" to the grown-up children of to-day.

would be expected if they could be supplied. I was to give up the copyright for the eight hundred dollars advanced. If this succeeded, then, on receiving five hundred dollars, I was to go to France and spend six months, and send home the same number of pages; the same for Germany, and so on. After deliberating some time, I declined it. I thought the number of pages too great for the time, and the compensation too small for the number of pages. Besides, I am now, for the first time for many years, in a situation at all settled and free from embarrassment; and I have now an opportunity which I might not have again to collect myself and pursue my studies. The difficulties in my way here have been removed sooner than I expected, when I last wrote from here. I feel inclined to continue here for the present year; and yet there is something very inviting in the prospect of travelling in Europe to advantage. Will you give me your opinion of the proposition made me? Perhaps you will think I ought not to have declined it. I have written that I would rather decline it, and yet the time for putting it into effect was not to be till next month. I have just said that I felt inclined to continue here for the present year at least. I am now quiet and undisturbed, and have a reasonable prospect of continuing so. I am settled here, and have around me the means, I think, of employing my time to advantage. The only thing I want is society; of that I am about destitute. Under present circumstances, I think, I had better stay here than return to Boston or Cambridge. . . . I did not wish to insert any articles of mine in the Extracts, for this reason. I did not wish to insert any articles of mine without inserting other American specimens; and I felt that it was an invidious task for one in my relation to them.

About the
Elegant
Extracts.

Still, if Walker insists, I will give my consent. Perhaps there is no need of any note, as you proposed; but I will leave that for your decision, if you will have the goodness to attend to it. I inserted Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, because I thought it as classical as anything in ^{Bryant's} *Thanatopsis* the volume. I think the same of his Address to a Waterfowl. I wish, then, the following articles to be inserted at the end of Part Second, following the articles in the list I sent Walker, in the order here given: Setting Sail, Address to the Sun, A Picture, Liberty to Athens, Consumption, The Coral Grove, The Broken Heart, How Beautiful is Night, The Wandering Spirit, A Tale. I have given these as among the best in my selected volume. I hope they will be found satisfactory. . . . If you will suggest any mode of transmission, I will send you my poem, and leave the publication of it with you.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, November 22, 1825.

I received, before your letter came to hand, an urgent note from the Society at New Haven, requesting a copy of my poem; and to avoid all occasion of reproach, I have concluded to give it to them. I regret very much that I must withhold my manuscript from you, but I hope soon to send a printed copy. I hope you will pardon me for this refusal. The proposition with regard to Europe must fail.

The steps
to the pub-
lishing of
his poem.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, December 8, 1825.

I received yours of the 2d on Monday, just as I was taking the stage for New Haven to attend to the publication of my poem. I found, on arriving there and consulting the officers of the Society, that if published there I must consent to sacrifice it. They were entirely willing I should publish it in Boston and derive any advantage from it I could, if I would only consent to publish it. They seemed to be pleased to have me publish it, as if at their request, though that they did not insist on. On Monday I received with yours a letter from J. G. Carter, with a proposal from Gray and Hilliard to allow me thirty dollars for my poem, if I would permit them to publish it in a Christmas volume they intend publishing. I do not think the offer large enough; and I should choose to have it published separately, yet I have not refused. I have now concluded to make you a visit next week, when I shall bring my manuscript with me, and make some arrangements for its publication if I can. I have never been so vexed with anything of mine as this. But, after all, I am willing to publish it, and yet I do not wish to sacrifice it entirely or for a trifle.

I am very glad to hear that my affair with Clapp is entirely closed, but I have been very sorry to put you to so much trouble as I have in it. . . . In managing it so cordially as you have done, you have put me under great obligations. I do not wish to have any further connections with newspapers, nor do I wish to provoke their attacks directly. I think, after what I have done with the Society at New Haven, and the consent

He wishes to
have nothing
more to do
with news-
papers.

they have given, that I am at entire liberty to publish my poem as I choose, and that no one has any business to question me. I am entirely willing to allow you to make any such inquiries with regard to a journey to Europe as you think proper.

He was now engaged in editing a "Geographical View of the World," to which he appended some fifty pages on the "Varieties of the Human Race," chiefly taken from the Mithridates of Adelung and Vater. At the same time he was waiting to enter upon new literary engagements so soon as they could be properly arranged. To such the following letter alludes.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, February 20, 1826.

I have been so shut out from the world here that I have neither seen nor heard a syllable from my poem, whether it has been well or ill received, or even received at all. . . . If you have any information to communicate on the subject contemplated when I was with you, I should be happy to hear it. If you can come to any conclusion with Richardson and Lord, or with Walker, I should like to hear of it as soon as may be conveniently. I do not wish the ground I took to be departed from. I rather wish they may be led to make their offers; and if they are not liberal, I wish the matter dropped at once. Will you let me know soon what you have done, or even if you have effected nothing?

I have heard nothing of my poem. I have some curiosity to know its reception; and if you have anything to

communicate on that point, it would be agreeable. Has it been attacked or defended, or has it been suffered to sleep undisturbed? Has the bookseller met with such a sale as to satisfy him? Do you find it well or ill spoken of among your friends? I wish to know whether Mr. Allston took the allusion to him at the conclusion well or ill. I should be sorry to have done anything disagreeable to him, particularly as my intentions were good.





CHAPTER XIII.

1826.

HIS POEM CRITICISED BY MR. BRYANT. — ALSO BY HENRY WARE, JR. — HIS POETICAL VIEWS. — HIS PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS.



HE reception of the poem, which discoursed

“Of mind, and its mysterious agencies,
And most of all, its high creative power,”

has already been briefly described. It is true that but few copies were sold. It was published too late after the event to meet the demand. But in another direction, as perhaps the most elaborate and finished poem of length which he had published, it commanded the highest praise. It was commented on by an appreciative brother-poet, Mr. Bryant, in the March number of the *United States Review* for 1826, in these glowing terms : —

“The poem before us is, in our opinion, not only one of the most successful efforts of its author, but a production of singular beauty and excellence in its kind. It is not properly a didactic poem, for it does not aim at the regular delivery of precepts, and still less does it depend for its interest upon anything like narrative. It is a series of poetical pictures, connected by a common subject, and drawn with that freedom of outline and richness of coloring peculiar to the author.”

The poem
criticised
by Mr.
Bryant,

“In their remarks on the earlier poetry of Percival, we recollect that the critics objected to its profusion of ornament, and complained that he often forsook the subject to go after the illustration. At the same time, everybody acknowledged the wonderful facility and grace of his diction, and the brilliancy and richness of his imagery; and most of us were willing to confess, that, whenever he went out of his way, it was in pursuit of some object that amply repaid his wanderings, — some sight of beauty, or sound of melody, which, had it been as readily perceived by our own duller senses, would have tempted us aside as well as himself. To us there is something exceedingly delightful in this reckless intoxication with which this author surrenders himself to the enchantment of that multitude of glorious and beautiful images that come crowding upon his mind, and that infinity of analogies and relations between natural objects, and again between these and the moral world, which seem to lie before him wherever he turns his eyes. The writings of no poet seem to be more the involuntary overflowings of his mind. It is, evidently, no laborious effort with him to search out and collect the thoughts and images which make the texture of his poetry, nor has he any difficulty in retaining them,

‘Till he has pencilled off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views.’

The readiness with which they are transferred to his pages is equalled only by the happiness of their conception.

“That in some of the poems of Percival this very abundance of poetic wealth should be somewhat oppressive to readers of colder imagination, is not at all extraor-

dinary ; but such will not, we believe, be the case with the poem before us. The exuberance of the author's imagination finds abundant scope in the nature of the subject he has chosen, and is at the same time agreeably chastened by the fine vein of thought that runs through the whole."

In the *North American Review* for April, 1826, he also found an able yet more severe critic in the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., whose article began thus : —

"It is a rare thing for a poet of Mr. Percival's genius and reputation to appear at the anniversary of one of our literary associations. It is equally rare to adopt blank verse in a poem designed for recitation, and to extend it to the length of eleven hundred lines. Genius and fame stand an unequal match against these unfavorable circumstances. Few hearers could listen without fatigue to any composition of so great length. Still less when there must be the constant struggle, ever disappointed and ever renewed, to trace the structure of the verse. And by the
Rev. Henry
Ware, Jr.

"But however ill adapted it may be for recitation, no such disadvantages attend it as offered from the press. We receive it as a poem to be read, and we read it without regarding its fitness to be spoken. It comes to the public with that recommendation from the author's name which insures it a candid perusal. The character of the subject and the occasion render it an object of more than ordinary notice, while the reputation of its fertile author, and the peculiarities of his beautiful but wayward pen, demand that it should receive an impartial examination from those who are solicitous about the popular poetry of our country."

The critic then went on to complain that the poet's sub-

ject was too extensive; after which he entered into a minute analysis of the poem itself, giving Percival the benefit of a most impartial and searching criticism. His excuse was that "Mr. Percival is too important a man, and his example of too great influence, to be sparing in the use of the scalpel." And then he mentioned some of the most obvious and radical defects of all his poetry. He said:—

"There is an excessive diffuseness in the style of Mr. Percival. It is not sufficiently compact. It wants pith and point; it lacks the energy which conciseness imparts. Everything is drawn out as far as possible; always flowing and sweet, and therefore sometimes languid and monotonous. His poetry is too much diluted. It consists too much in words, which are music to the ear, but too often send a feeble echo of the sense to the mind. There is also a superabundance of images in proportion to the thoughts. They skip about the magical scene in such numbers, that they stand in the way of one another and of the main design. He is too careless in selection; whatever occurs to him he puts down and lets it remain. He is not master of

'That last, the greatest art, — the art to blot.'

Writing, as he evidently does, from the fulness of an excited mind, upon the impulse of the moment, his thoughts crowd one another, and cannot always fall at once into their places and in the happiest expression. There will be confusion sometimes in their ranks, and want of due proportion. . . . Everything wears an extemporaneous and unfinished appearance. Strength and weakness are most strangely combined, and passages of surpassing elegance and magnificence are crowded in amongst slovenly

and incomplete. Hence it is rare to meet with a paragraph of any length equally sustained throughout. Flaws show themselves in the most brilliant sentences, and the reader is compelled to stop with a criticism in the midst of his admiration. . . .

“For this reason, his powers are displayed to greater advantage in particular passages and in short ^{His best pieces the} pieces, than in any extended composition. At a ^{shortest.} single heat he may strike out a fine conception, and give it the happiest shape. But when his thoughts and pen run on through successive parts of a subject, he easily loses himself in a wilderness of words, beautiful and musical, but conveying indistinct impressions, or rather conveying impressions instead of ideas; reminding us of poetry read while we are falling asleep,—sweet and soothing, but presenting very shadowy images. Yet no man has more felicity in expression, or more thoroughly delights and fascinates in his peculiar passages.”

Among his earlier writings is an exposition of his poetical theory. It is worthy of note, not merely as coming from his pen, but as perhaps the first essay in our literature on this subject. It is singular, too, that his general views should be nearly identical with those of Bacon and Coleridge, while yet the essay bears on its very face the unmistakable evidence of originality. In the Preface to the first number of *Clio* he thus speaks of the spirit and aim of poetry:—

“Poetry should be a sacred thing, not to be thrown away on the dull and low realities of life. It ^{His poetical theory.} should live only with those feelings and imaginations which are above this world, and are the anticipations of a brighter and better being. It should be the creator of a sublimity undebased by anything earthly, and

the embodier of a beauty that mocks at all defilement and decay. It should be, in fine, the historian of human nature, in its fullest possible perfection, and the painter of all those lines and touches in earth and heaven, which nothing but taste can see and feel. It should give to its forms the expressions of angels, and throw over its pictures the hues of immortality. There can be but one extravagance in poetry; it is to clothe feeble conceptions in mighty language. But if the mind can keep pace with the pen, if the fancy can fill and dilate the words it summons to array its images, no matter how high its flights, how seemingly wild its reaches; the soul that can rise will follow with pleasure, and find, in the harmony of its own emotions with the high creations around it, the surest evidence that such things are not distempered ravings, and that in the society of beings so pure and so exalted it is good to be present."

In the Preface to the second part of Prometheus he defends the luxuriant fulness of his own poetry:—

"I do not like that poetry which bears the marks of the file and burnisher. I like to see it in the full ebullition of feeling and fancy, foaming up with the spirit of life, and glowing with the rainbows of a glad inspiration. When there is a quick swell of passion, and an ever coming and going of beauty, as the light of the soul glances over it, I could not have the heart to press it down to its solid quintessence. . . . I like to see something savage and luxuriant in works of imagination, throwing itself out like the wild vines of the forest, rambling and climbing over the branches, and twining themselves into a maze of windings. What would you think of a fine horse, if you saw him always on the *curvet* and the *demi-volte*? Would he not seem a grander object,

Likes a luxuriant style.

if, after gathering his strength on the bit, he should burst out and sweep over the plain in the full force of his speed? or, as Homer finely expresses it, (I give my own English,) ‘Like a full-fed horse, who breaks his band, and runs prancing through the plain, to where he loved to bathe in the fair-flowing river; exulting, he holds his head aloft, and his mane tosses around his shoulders.’ ”

And in a paper entitled, *Τὸ Καλόν*, or the *Ideal* in Poetry, he further defines his peculiar theory:—

“I have a few things to say on the *ideal* in poetry. I wish to vindicate its just claims, and to show, as far as I can in the short space allotted me, that it is not dangerous ground for the poet to venture on. Indeed, I would rather consider it as a field, wherein he can make his brightest efforts and gain his noblest victories, as, in fact, the only element in which his imagination can spread its wings to its loftiest daring. I understand by the *ideal* the sublimation of taste, in all its departments of the great, the beautiful, and the tender, to its highest point of elevation and refinement,—the abstraction from objects of natural sublimity and beauty, of everything low and abhorrent to the purest feeling,—and the combination of all those qualities which irresistibly command our awe and admiration into one perfect picture of all that can be attractive in the thing in question. It is such a purification of existing objects, as we find in the masterpieces of ancient statuary,—the Venus and the Apollo; or in the celestial touches and heaven-breathing tints of Raphael and Correggio.

“Objects as they really exist around us have but little of poetry in them. By the aid of that creative faculty, the imagination, they lay aside their deformities, and are invested with an attire of unblemished beauty. They

need the aid of distance to be viewed with unmingled satisfaction. It is only when the blue haze has thrown over them its softening and mellowing mantle, that they appear to us in that form of seducing loveliness which can control the refined heart, and bend to adoration the mind, to which beauty has become a portion of its constant meditation, which has surrounded its conceptions with the essence of all that is sweet and high in expression and symmetrical in outline, and has made to itself the whole universe one system of perfect harmonies. It was by this choice of every delicate feature in the assembled loveliness of Greece that the perfect image of ancient beauty was formed; and it is only by thus abstracting the fairest portions of nature, and combining them into new and peculiar groupings, that the poet can build such a fabric of great and rich and glowing thought, and adorn it with such a dress of tender and touching sentiment, as will, through every age and in every nation where its language can be understood, attract around it the delight and admiration of every cultivated and susceptible mind.

“It is another attribute of the *ideal* to consider every object in nature as animated; to suppose that the mountains, the woods, and the skies are actuated by a spirit of intelligence, and capable of communicating with each other in the mute adoration they render to the collected majesty of the universe. We imagine one great animating power diffused throughout nature, and bending all things to its purposes. We imagine each particular object actuated by its own peculiar spirit, conferring with the beings around it, and tending upward to the common centre of all things. We therefore address them as sympathizing with our emotions. We call upon the dark

woods and silent waters to join in our sorrows, and the bright skies and flowering fields to partake of our rejoicings. When the ideal poet goes out into the solitudes of rocks and woods, he is not alone, for he has made all things around him replete with life and action; he has given them a sense to hear and a language to reply, and he can hold conversation with them on all that touches the heart and kindles the fancy.

‘ All live and move to the poetic eye, —
The winds have voices, and the stars of night
Are spirits throned in brightness, keeping watch
O’er earth and its inhabitants; the clouds,
That gird the sun with glory, are a train
In panoply of gold around him set,
To guard his morning and his evening throne.
The elements are instruments employed,
By unseen hands, to work *their* sovereign will.
They do *their* bidding. When the storm goes forth,
’T is but the thunderer’s car, whereon he rides
Aloft in triumph, o’er our prostrate heads.
Its roar is but the rumbling of his wheels,
Its flashes are his arrows; and the folds
That curl and heave upon the warring winds,
The dust, that rolls beneath his coursers’ feet.’

It is this feeling of universal life which runs through all the noblest efforts of poetry. Platonic and extravagant it may be to the man of cold reason, who is obstinately bent on believing no further than his senses will lead him, and who will reject and give the lie to every illusion, however sweet and lofty it may be. But he who can follow the aspirations of Milton and Thomson in their universal hymns, of Coleridge in his address to Mont Blanc, of Wordsworth in the bolder flights of his *Excursion*, and of Byron in those higher efforts of his genius which his enemies have called *lakeish* and affected, — he who can do

this will not ask the strictness of demonstration to convince him that these bright pictures of beauty and magnificence, however unreal they may be, are not such as can give the sweetest pleasure to the heart, and lift him to the purest regions of intellectual enjoyment. If I had the making of my own heaven, it should be formed of such refined materials, and inhabited by such master spirits. It should be filled with the fairest beauty, the purest virtue, the brightest glory, and the fondest friendship; in fine, it should be all that the most exalted imagination can conceive, and the best heart can feel; and such ought to be the *ideal* in poetry."

The same views are given, in poetical language, in the poem *Poetry*, in which he considers poetry in a two-fold point of view, — as a spirit and a manifestation; and also in the prose essays appended to the first volume of his poems.

In a prose paper, *The Philosopher*, he thus alludes to the mystic union of philosophy, religion, and poetry: —

"Look up to the open sky and the unchanging stars, and through them to the one great light that shines in the zenith of all, and you will hear a music, sweeter even than that of the spheres, as evolving from the Power that rules the spheres, proclaiming in tones of fullest and completest harmony the one great principle of our intellectual and moral existence, — philosophy, religion, and poetry sit enthroned as a spiritual triunity in the shrine of man's highest nature. The perfect vision of all-embracing Truth, the vital feeling of all-blessing Good, and the living sense of all-gracing Beauty, — they form united the Divinity of Pure Reason."*

* Appendix D.

In his view, poetry, as he writes in the Preface of his last published volume, is "an art which requires a ^{The demands} mastery of the riches and niceties of a language; ^{of poetry.} a full knowledge of the science of versification, not only in its own peculiar principles of rhythm and melody, but in its relations to elocution and music, with that delicate natural perception and that facile execution which render the composition of verse hardly less easy than that of prose; a deep and quick insight into the nature of man, in all his varied faculties, intellectual and emotive; a clear and full perception of the power and beauty of nature, and of all its various harmonies with our own thoughts and feelings; and, to gain a high rank in the present age, wide and exact attainments in literature and art in general. Nor is the possession of such faculties and attainments all that is necessary; but such a sustained and self-collected state of mind as gives one the mastery of his genius, and at the same time presents to him the ideal as an immediate reality, not as a remote conception."

If we compare this view of poetry with the essay of Shelley, the mystic utterances of Novalis, and the principles which underlie the poetry of Dana, Bryant, ^{A kindred spirit in} Jones Very, and Mrs. Browning, we shall find ^{contemporary literature.} a striking similarity. It seems as if each, seeking in the depths of his own consciousness, had found an answer to his questionings of the genius of poetry. A subtle spiritual sympathy is traceable in their works. They are so many distinct witnesses to the meditative spirit of the age. De Quincey has suggested that "meditative poetry is perhaps that which will finally maintain most power upon generations more thoughtful."* If I mistake not, it has already gained the most power. The

* Essays on the Poets, p. 38.

introspective and searching analysis of the soul, resulting from meditative habits, turns the eyes of our poets continually inward. Solitary meditation amid the grand and beautiful in nature has become most congenial to their mood. Especially is this characteristic of American poets. As early as 1833 Dana wrote: "A more spiritual philosophy perhaps than man has before looked on, and a poetry twin with it, are coming into existence."* His own works, both in prose and poetry, bear witness to the truth of his remark. Perhaps no writer of the age, excepting Coleridge and Wordsworth, has shown deeper insight or a truer understanding of the human heart. He is continually throwing light on the vexed problems of life. Directness of aim, truthfulness of speech, and honest familiarity are never wanting; while the feeling that life has a profounder meaning and a higher purpose than we yet dream of, breathes over his thoughts a kind of religious awe. His imagination, brooding with fearful energy, seems to find delight equally in scenes of supernatural horror and "all-gracing beauty." If Percival's imagination has less spectral and electric power, its activity and range are much greater. If he enters little into the joys and sorrows of common life, it is only that he may live in that ideal beauty and perfection which speech fails to grasp. He is impatient with human depravity. In early life, the thought that sin and want beset the race and permit very few to reach the highest perfection of which our nature is capable, almost drove him mad. His poem entitled *The Suicide* reads as if it were suggested by this very thought. Imagination and sensibility contended like enraged rivals for the mastery of his earlier years. But Percival is not without that meditative philo-

* Preface to *The Idle Man*.

sophic spirit which belongs to Dana. His philosophy is even less tangible than that of Novalis. It is purely intellectual. Its truths seem as if collected amid the utter loneliness of an introspective life. Sympathy with nature, both as a teacher and a spirit, the fearless assertion of truth, and a spiritual aspiration which finds its rest only with universal Deity, characterize its utterances. If Shelley had lived longer, no doubt his sharp, clear insight would have penetrated still further into the mysteries of poetic truth, for his writings are similar to Percival's in spirit. The poems of Jones Very, coming nearer to the received doctrines of religious faith, repeat the same restless yearning and aspiration; and Bryant's *Thanatopsis* reflects the same, though in darker colors.

The *Prometheus* contains in fragments the essence of Percival's philosophy, and the story of Pro-^{His philoso-}metheus strangely fascinated him. His life, ^{phy.} in ambition and energy, in aspiration and insight, in disappointments and endurance, had a singular likeness to that of the mythical hero. The poem takes its name from the similarity of spirit between Percival and his ancient prototype. It reflects his real mental life more than any other work. It abounds in passages which reach our inmost thoughts; but the wild and gloomy ravings in the second part are such as he would not have written later in life. For these he has been strongly censured by religious critics; but if he at times threw out doubts respecting the credibility of revelation, in the same work he drew pictures of meek and simple faith, which will bear comparison with any similar utterances in confessedly religious poetry. The holy affections of childhood, the beauty of confiding trust, and the thoughts which spring from meditation on a future life, are themes

upon which he dwells with a frequency and earnestness that show how congenial they were to his own soul.

The Dignity of Man is more thoughtful than any other of his writings. Its leading purpose is to set forth that creative spiritual power which

"Is in us, as an instinct, where it lives
 A part of us, we can as ill throw off
 As bid the vital pulses cease to play,
 And yet expect to live, — the spirit of life,
 And hope, and elevation, and eternity, —
 The fountain of all honor, all desire
 After a higher and a better state, —
 An influence so quickening, it imbues
 All things we see with its own qualities,
 And therefore Poetry, another name
 For this innate Philosophy, so often
 Gives life and body to invisible things,
 And animates the insensible, diffusing
 The feelings, passions, tendencies of man,
 Through the whole range of being. Though on earth,
 And most of all in living things, as birds
 And flowers, in things that beautify, and fill
 The air with harmony, and in the waters,
 So full of change, so apt to elegance
 Or power, — so tranquil when they lie at rest,
 So sportive when they trip it lightly on
 Their prattling way, and with so terrible
 And lion-like severity, when roused
 To break their bonds, and hurry forth to war
 With winds and storms, — though it find much on earth
 Suited to its high purpose, yet the sky
 Is its peculiar home, and most of all,
 When it is shadowed by a shifting veil
 Of clouds, like to the curtain of a stage,
 Beautiful in itself, and yet concealing
 A more exalted beauty." *

This philosophic spirit is shown to be the highest reach of the great masters of song, — Homer, Æschylus, Dante,

* Poems, Vol. II. p. 148.

Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Tasso, — all of whom the poet sees in a vision, in three circles, one above the other. In graphic, rapid painting, the poem is not surpassed even by Mrs. Browning's *Vision of the Poets*. Percival was singularly happy in throwing a wealth of imaginative power into single passages, often into single words, and of such passages and graphic words *The Dignity of Man* is full, though, considered as a work of art, it is a tissue of mere fragments. In the glow of poetic heat, he pours forth imagery, thought, and impassioned feeling in lavish abundance. If this be set down as a fault, we may well ask, What poem is complete? There is no work which is not the fragment of a greater; and a poem, however entire may be its epic completeness in design and comprehension, is level with its aim only in special parts. Thus judged, our poet both excels and fails. He descends less frequently from the elevation of genuine poetry than almost any other writer; but his unvarying succession of brilliant imagery and suggestive thought has injured the effect of his finest passages. Thus in *The Dignity of Man* we are constantly turned aside by minute beauties of thought and expression; yet with all the irregularity of its movement, no one can fail to be deeply impressed by its mystic philosophy and spiritual meditateness.

The *Love of Study* and *Mental Harmony* could have been written only by Percival. With a vividness which marks them as genuine, they picture the inward life of the scholar and the strong sympathy of kindred minds. The following passage from *Mental Harmony* admits us into the spirit of his mental life: —

“ All life,
And all inferior orders, in the waste

Of being spread before us, are to him
Who lives in meditation, and the search
Of wisdom and of beauty, open books,
Wherein he reads the Godhead, and the ways
He works through his creation, and the links
That fasten us to all things, with a sense
Of fellowship and feeling, so that we
Look not upon a cloud, or falling leaf,
Or flower new blown, or *human face divine*,
But we have caught new life, and wider thrown
The door of reason open, and have stored
In memory's secret chamber, for dark years
Of age and weariness, the food of thought,
And thus extended mind, and made it young,
When the thin hair turns gray, and feeling dies." *

In many other poems our author gives us insight into the singular system of philosophic belief, the principles of which he set forth only in poetry. The general tone of his speculations is sad enough. While he found delight in bold and lofty imaginings, few could sympathize with him or even follow him. His life and philosophy were much alike, — both earnest, profound, and sad.

* Poems, Vol. I. p. 41.





CHAPTER XIV.

1826—1828.

A CHANGE IN HIS EMPLOYMENTS. — ENGAGES TO EDIT MALTE-BRUN'S GEOGRAPHY. — HIS LITERARY POSITION AND PROSPECTS. — TALK OF ESTABLISHING A LITERARY PAPER IN BOSTON. — CLIO No. III. — ENGAGES TO SUPERVISE THE PRINTING OF WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY. — HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS. — THE SEVERE NATURE OF HIS TASKS. — A CORRECTOR OF BLUNDERS. — DR. WEBSTER AS A LEXICOGRAPHER.



WE enter now upon a period in which Percival's powers were tried in a new field. We pass gradually but inevitably from the exciting and joyous days of poetical composition to the unvarying, plodding tasks of a hard-work-^{A new period in his biography.}ing literary man, who willingly tore the chaplet from his brows, and endured poverty and seclusion while laboring for his daily bread. Percival's life may now largely be told in his own words. The letters to Dr. Hayward, although mainly on matters of business, contain many revelations of his own thoughts and feelings. To him Percival gave his entire confidence; and he was always free to speak of himself when this confidence had been won. His two chief labors for several ^{His future work.} years were the revision of Malte-Brun's Geography and the correction of the proof-sheets of Webster's Dictionary. They were both laborious, time-consuming works; and by various delays they both kept him

engaged far beyond the time originally named in the contracts. They were only varied by writing occasional short pieces of poetry, and by the diligent prosecution of his studies in the languages of modern Europe and in the physical sciences, more particularly those of geology and mineralogy.

After a short visit to Boston, in January, 1826, as the guest of Dr. Hayward and Professor Ticknor, during which he made an informal engagement to edit Engages to edit Malte-Brun. the American edition of Malte-Brun, he removed from Boston to New Haven, and began to make preparation for his new literary employment. To the business part of this undertaking the following correspondence was largely devoted. I have, however, only given those extracts which relate chiefly to the personal history of the poet.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, March 12, 1826.

I received yours of the 8th on Saturday, and was very happy to learn that you had succeeded in procuring a part of the original of Malte-Brun. I trust I shall now be able to give a correctness to Walker's edition which Wells and Lily's wants. I have no disposition to take advantage of such a circumstance, but I could show a series of errors of translation, I believe, which are anything but honorable to the work. . . . This duty of correcting these errors from the original will add to my labor, but I do it cheerfully. I certainly should not be willing to lend my name to such errors when I had it in my power to correct them, as I shall have.

As for poetry, I have been so occupied since I have

been here with Malte-Brun, that I have had no time for it beyond the preparation of the volume to be ^{Discussion} published by the Carvills, — which will be out ^{of literary} prospects. soon. I am engaged to write something for two Souvenirs. I do not wish to meddle with theatrical pieces. I had rather leave them to the professional prize-masters. A passage in Mr. Everett's report on the national pictures will explain my feelings on that point. You say I ought seriously to engage in an extensive poem. I cannot think of it, until I have fulfilled my present engagements. When they are completed, had I other similar ones offered me, I would engage in them, rather than spend the gains of this year in a pursuit which has proved to me worse than disappointment. Still I do not altogether abandon my hopes and wishes. I have thought often of many subjects, which to me seem noble and worthy of any mind; but I have no assurance that I shall ever engage in any of them. If I do, it must be from motives altogether posthumous and extramundane. If I can be sustained through a long and arduous task by such motives and such hopes, I may accomplish it. Milton could; but I am not Milton. I am heartily sick of writing at order, furnishing little sixpenny jobs to a speculating bookseller; yet this is the only way a poet can now obtain a substantial reward, and that, from the extremely limited demand, does not deserve the name. . . .

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

HARTFORD, March 18, 1826.

. . . . To be plain with you, I have no confidence in literature. I should wish to have a little if I could gather

it anywhere, but as yet it has been but a sloe-bush to me; for a few taskless hopes, it has sent me away in
Literary dis-
appointment. no enviable condition, though at present I feel myself from other sources more assured than I have long been. It will not answer for me to continue here (I mean in Connecticut). If I had no other object than writing, it would ill repay me for any efforts I might make; and if I must live by my pen, I should die here of uncertainty and solitude in a little while. I have never known much of society, nothing regularly, what little I have only by glimpses; and yet I need it, and that suited to me, not only for my happiness, but for my comfortable existence even. But in Connecticut, where all are busy
His loneli-
ness in Con-
necticut. in their own way, each about his own *little important* matters, I have been so unlike and peculiar, eccentric they say, that I must live alone now, will I, nil I. Not that I complain. I have gone astray apparently of my own free choice, though Heaven knows, and I know, not so; and now I must go astray in the path I have chosen. In truth, if there is a place where I can be liberally and generously rewarded for literary labors, always supposing they really and intrinsically deserve it, and where I can, in my literary character, gain access to and hold a station in good society, I must go there; and if there is such a place for me, I believe it is Boston. . . .

He was favorably considering the recent proposal of
Decides to
remove to
Boston. Dr. Hayward, that he should come to Boston to live, and the prospect of regular literary employment had great weight with him. Later on he decided to go.

The subject of a new edition of his collected poetry

was now agitated. Cummings and Hillard of Boston were to be the publishers. The following letter from Dr. Hayward explains it, and touches upon his removal, and the review of the poem, *The Dignity of Man*.

A new edition of his poetry talked of.

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

Boston, April 12, 1826.

DEAR SIR, —

I have been in daily expectation, since I received your letter, of being able to communicate to you the result of my negotiation with Cummings and Hillard. I did not receive their answer till last evening, and I regret to say that it is unfavorable to our wishes. The following is a copy of it: —

Boston, April 11, 1826.

DEAR SIR, —

After considering the subject, we feel compelled to say that we think it inexpedient for us to publish an edition of Percival's poems *at present*. When done at all, they should be done in handsome style in all respects, which would require more money than we should be willing to devote to them in the *present* state of the money market.

Respectfully yours,

CUMMINGS, HILLARD, & CO.

The reason for declining the publication assigned by them I have no doubt is the real and only one. The scarcity of money is very great here at the present moment, and the best of notes sell in the market at one and a half per cent discount a month, and about a year since money could be had at four per cent a year. This state

of things cannot long continue. It is the effect, probably, of want of confidence in individuals, generally arising from the extensive and alarming failures in England. I am confident that it is not with us the consequence of overtrading, nor does it arise from want of capital; for though it has continued for more than two months, hardly a failure has taken place. It is probable, therefore, that when things return to their old state, Cummings and Hillard will be very glad to undertake the publication. I presume the same cause would operate at the present moment upon the proposed publication of a Biographical Dictionary. Walker does not feel quite able to go on with it alone, and Carter has heretofore been inclined to undertake it with him. I have made no inquiries on this subject, however, since I last wrote you. I trust this will not discourage you from coming to reside in Boston. For I presume you would find the expense but very little more than in the country, and your free access to books and literary society would more than compensate for the difference, to say nothing of your being in the way to avail yourself of any literary engagement that might offer.

I presume you do not like the review of your poem in the North American. I am sure I do not. I think it neither fair nor just, and by no means creditable to Mr. Henry Ware, the author. It does not express the general sentiment entertained here on the subject; and I can only account for it by supposing that he thought the beauties were too obvious to be dwelt upon, and therefore said but little of them, and was fearful that too great praise would induce you to write too much in haste, and produce what he feared would not be worthy of the high poetical powers which he acknowledges you to possess. In fact,

I have ever considered him among your warmest admirers; and I presume he would say that he cannot give you a stronger proof of his good feeling than by speaking freely of what he considers detracts from the merits of your writing. . . .

Percival was again in Boston in May, making proposals to publish the weekly literary paper already referred to in a preceding chapter. His friends Alexander, Dawes, Hayward, Hale, Ticknor, and others obtained for him over two hundred and twenty subscribers, with the promise of many more, — enough to insure the success of the publication. His name was popular with the public; and his friends thought there was every prospect of success. Dr. Hayward wrote: "I am confident that subscribers enough can be obtained here to defray the whole expense of publication." But Percival did not think so. Subscribers did not run up fast enough, and he gave it up. If the plan had succeeded, he was going to Boston to live. Mr. Nathan Hale and Dr. George Hayward were doing all they could for him; and in a letter to Dr. Hayward, dated at Berlin, June 22, 1826, he thus alluded to this and other plans:—

"I have eight hundred dollars on hand. If I cannot be supported in this project without risk of loss and a prospect of gain, I choose to use this sum in supporting me while I can prepare some original work of extent. Here is my ambition, — not in writing scraps for a periodical. That I would do for a reward, and if it would establish me; otherwise, not. I am in no want of plans for extended works. I communicated to Mr. Dawes plans for four tragedies, two

Proposes to
publish a
weekly
paper in
Boston.

His ambition
and plans
for literary
works.

epics, two moral poems,* and we discussed a plan of a series of poetical tales. I say this to you because I have confided in you. If I could have my choice, I would devote myself to these labors. I do not ask wealth nor expect it. I ask only a respectable competency; small even would content me, but secure. I am indifferent to what the world at large pursues, entirely so; but I would wish to do much more in literature than I have yet done, and let me say, I will. Here I am, and have long been, unpleasantly situated. I am waiting the decision of this prospect in Boston to remove. If nothing further can be done without my presence and published efforts, I decline it; but I have the highest sense of your friendly efforts for me.

"I have been looking over the loose pieces of poetry I have by me, printed and in manuscript. I find they would make about one hundred and fifty pages. I am inclined to publish them in a volume as a third number of *Clio*. Can you question any of your booksellers on the subject? I would like to publish, and then if I were free to choose, I would like seriously to apply myself to some extended work. I think I must do this or abandon literature entirely. When I have written a book, I can offer it to the public boldly. There it is, take it, if you please. They cannot ask, Will he go on? He has gone on and finished,—begun, continued, and ended."

* Their titles were the following: Tragedies, — *Athelstan*, *Parthenia*, *New Faust*, *Orestes*; Epics, — *Fall of Peruvians*, *Fall of Alleghus*; Moral Poems, — *Prometheus*, Part III., *Dream of the World*: none of which, save *Athelstan*, were ever written out, and this only in part.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

BERLIN, August 14, 1826.

I have returned here, and will now fulfil my promise of writing you on my return. I am entirely willing to fix myself in Boston. I doubt whether I can find a place better suited to me as a literary man; and it is time for me to become such decidedly, or to seek some other employment. I have relied so long on my literary employments that it will be very difficult for me to engage in any other; and I am, besides, more than ever desirous to continue them to some better purpose than I have yet done. While here, I feel the want of all sympathy. Besides, I have been very ill used here by certain booksellers, the details of which I may communicate to you when I see you again. I am willing to fix myself in Boston without any other prospect than this, Conditions of his going to Boston. that if I write anything in future, I shall have a fair prospect of just and honorable treatment in the publication of it. I am only anxious for one thing in removing there,—such lodgings as I had talked with you about when I was in Boston last January and May.

These were chosen for him by Dr. Hayward, and he was to pay for them ninety dollars a year. The Doctor said: “I am well satisfied that it [Boston] is the best place for you, and I am also perfectly well satisfied that you had better go on with your paper.” Percival wrote August 18, 1826, that he should be ready to leave Berlin “by week after next.” But at the last moment, for some cause now unknown, he Prepares to remove, but at the last moment decides to stay. decided not to go. He went on, however, a few months

after to attend to his literary engagements; and during this visit made a contract with Mr. Samuel Walker for the editing of Malte-Brun. As much that is peculiar to Percival hangs upon this document, I give it entire:—

BOSTON, November 9, 1826.

It is agreed and understood between James G. Percival and Samuel Walker, that said Percival shall Contract with Mr. Walker for Malte-Brun. prepare by the first day of December, 1827, a revised edition of the English Translation of Malte-Brun's Geography, from the English edition in seven volumes, retaining the original text entire, and adding such matter, in the form of notes or otherwise, as said Percival shall judge necessary to adapt the edition to the present state of geographical knowledge,—that said Percival shall not be required to furnish any part of the edition sooner than the 1st of April, 1827, nor faster afterwards than at the rate of one of the seven original volumes per month,—that said Walker, in consideration of the above, shall pay said Percival six hundred dollars in equal portions, on the delivery of each of the seven volumes of which the work is composed, that is, at the rate of eighty-five dollars and seventy-two cents per volume, payable on its delivery to said Walker, or his agent by him appointed,—and that said Percival shall insert his name in the title-page as editor.

S. WALKER.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE HAYWARD, *Witness.*

Clio No. III. was now preparing for publication.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW YORK, November 24, 1826.

DEAR SIR, —

I have opened a negotiation with the Carvills for the publication of the volume I failed in publishing at Boston. They will buy an edition of me; and the ^{Difficulty in publishing} only obstacle is the circumstance that a part of ^{Clio.} the poems to be inserted, those published in the Literary Gazette, have been published by Cummings and Hillard in their volume, "Poems from the United States Literary Gazette," which they have copyrighted. The Carvills wish from Cummings and Hillard a written declaration that they do not claim the copyright of my articles in particular. This volume was published without asking my consent to their assuming the copyright of my articles, although I was notified indirectly after it was set on foot, by Carter, in a letter requesting my Φ B K poem for the volume. I never gave them a direct consent to such an assumption of copyright, and I think myself as much entitled as they at least, I think, indeed, much more, to the right of publishing them as a volume of my own. I wish you to see them, and obtain from them a written declaration, declaring that they have no claim to the copyright of my poems there inserted in particular, on my account alone, without mentioning my negotiation with any publisher in particular, but only that I wish it that I may have no difficulty in publishing them in any collection of my poems to which I may wish to possess a right. I cannot think they will be so unjust as to dispute with me. If they should, I can quote a passage from their Gazette where they most distinctly allow this right to Bryant for

two articles originally published in their Gazette; and surely I have as good a right over my own productions as Bryant. Will you have the goodness to procure such a declaration as soon as may be, as the arrangement with the Carvills is only delayed by this difficulty?

The publishers kindly yielded the point, and every
 Removed. obstacle was taken away in publishing the
 volume.

He was now about engaging himself upon the correction
 Engagement of the proof-sheets of Webster's Unabridged
 upon Web- Dictionary. While in New York superintend-
 ster's Dic- ing the publication of Clio No. III., he wrote
 tionary. a letter, dated January 9, 1827, to Dr. Hayward, in which
 he says:—

“Owing to the delay of types, the printing of the Dictionary will not begin much before March. I shall have much leisure when settled in New Haven for revising *Malte-Brun*. I have been here a long time in uncomfortable suspense, but I consider my removal to New Haven a fortunate exchange. I have a particular attachment to that place, and I shall for the present year be well employed there. When I am settled there, I will send you word. I have made arrangements for publishing a volume with the Carvills. They will publish it probably in March. *Inter nos*, I offered the Greek Committee in Philadelphia all my poems on the Greek cause, printed or in manuscript, to be published for the sole benefit of the Greeks. I received the short answer that such a volume would not pay the expense of paper and printing. I shall not attempt again to be chivalrous.”

As giving insight into Percival's work upon the Dictionary, and as furnishing the key to much that follows, I

insert the following document with its several modifications entire:—

This Indenture witnesseth, That, whereas Sherman Converse proposes to publish an American Dictionary of the English Language by Noah Webster,^{The contract.} LL. D., and whereas said Converse has contracted with Hezekiah Howe, of New Haven, to superintend the printing of the same, it is mutually understood and agreed by and between said Converse and James G. Percival as follows, viz.: The said Howe is to read the first proof of said work, of each sheet as it comes from the press and by copy, to correct the same, and to furnish a clean proof; which clean proof the said Percival agrees to compare with the proof read by said Howe, to see whether the errors marked by the said Howe are corrected by the printer, and to mark such as are not; after which he is to read said proof with Mr. Webster by copy, which when read is to be corrected by the printer, and a clean proof taken for said Percival, and one for Mr. Webster; which clean proof said Percival is to compare with the one already corrected, and mark any errors previously marked, and not corrected by the printer. Said Percival is then to read the said proof, and Mr. Webster will also read his; which two proofs are to be corrected, and two clean proofs taken; which clean proofs said Percival is to compare with those already corrected, one of which Mr. Howe's printer is to read, and said Percival the other, and to revise both after they are corrected, by a clean proof, to stand by the form as it is going to press, to see that every error marked is corrected. Said Percival is to see that the last proof read is taken from the form after it is

placed on the press for printing, in order to avoid errors by transferring it from the imposing-stone. All the above readings and revisions the said Percival is to give the said proofs promptly and faithfully, and at the time the said work requires, so as to facilitate as far as possible the progress of the work; and in no case is he to suffer any other engagement to interfere with a faithful execution of this contract. And if, in the judgment of said Percival, any additional reading or readings of any proof or proofs of said work shall be necessary, said Percival shall give it them. And the said Percival agrees to attend to the fulfilment of this contract, without interruption, from the commencement of the printing of said work to its completion, except prevented by sickness. And the said Converse agrees, on his part, to pay the said Percival eight hundred dollars for his said services, to be rendered as above, provided it takes not exceeding ten months to complete the work; and it is understood that one sheet of said work per day is to be executed. If it exceeds ten months to complete the work, then said Converse is to pay said Percival in proportion as for the ten months. Said Converse further agrees to pay said Percival one hundred dollars at the completion of each half volume, and the remainder at the completion of the entire work.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this eleventh day of January, 1827, in New York.

S. CONVERSE.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

In presence of
ROBERT H. DAVY.
HENRY S. VAN ORDEN.

NEW HAVEN, July 4, 1827.

Whereas it has become necessary for James G. Percival to read the manuscript of Webster's Diction- A modifica-
 ary, preparatory to its being put in the hands of tion.
 the compositors, and whereas the said Percival has agreed to read and correct the same; which will be an extra labor not recognized in the above contract, I hereby agree to pay, or cause the said Percival to be paid, for such extra service, the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars. This extra service is to consist in a general inspection of the whole manuscript, and a particular inspection of all the scientific words, and a careful correction of errors which he may discover in or under such words, and a careful attention to the alphabetical arrangement of the whole vocabulary.

S. CONVERSE.

NEW HAVEN, August 29, 1827.

It is now ascertained that the proof-readers can examine only three sheets per week. This cir- Another.
 cumstance is not to affect the compensation to the said J. G. Percival, as agreed upon in the above contract.

S. CONVERSE.

NEW HAVEN, December 24, 1827.

I have this day made a new arrangement with Dr. Percival as to his services, but his compensation And another.
 is to remain the same.

S. CONVERSE.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, January 31, 1827.

I have now settled myself in New Haven, at least till
 Settled final- I have accomplished my task with Webster's
 ly in New Haven. Dictionary. . . . I am glad, after all, that I
 am stationed here, and that too in a regular employment.
 I have just been struck by an expression in Campbell's
 Magazine. I notice it only because it chimed in so ex-
 "Authorship actly with my feelings and convictions, "Au-
 a name thorship is a name without a trade." Even in
 without a trade." England the author is not an allowed member
 of the social order. The author stands out in prominent
 relief, hanging on, like some connate fatness, only by the
 skin, or he is dovetailed in to fill up some leaking crevice,
 hidden by the deep shade of some projecting bookseller.
 In this country a mere author has no place. For the
 present year I have enough to employ me; and the fruits
 of it will leave me here, supplied with the means of
 abiding some other issue, now uncertain, but which I may
 by that time identify. I regret I ever left here. Every
 man needs a place to hail from, else he is called a wan-
 The author derer, without plan or principle. If his person
 needs a home. is but a transitory thing in place, his mind is
 thought equally transitory in purpose. Had I been
 merely an author, and clung to this place through good
 and evil, it would have been better for me on the whole
 than to have changed as I have done, though I did it in
 hope. And yet in executing some literary labors, this
 place has its inconveniences,—the want of references
 for authorities. I find it will be so in preparing the
 edition of Malte-Brun. . . . Yet this is no objection to

it with me. For I really do not think it any advantage for me to be employed in such editions. They may give immediate profit, but I distrust the final result of such labors. My health is as usual. Remember me, with best respects, to Mrs. Hayward.

The following is in reply to a letter from Dr. Hayward, inquiring if he had read Dr. Channing's celebrated sermon on "Unitarian Christianity most favorable to Piety," and how he liked it.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, March 22, 1827.

I have just read Dr. Channing's sermon. When I received your letter, I had not even heard of it, Dr. Channing's great sermon. as I do not go into society. I went to the book-stores, but could not find a copy. They had had none; they had ordered none; none had been called for. I spoke to an acquaintance about it, who this morning brought me a copy, the only one he knew of in town, — the property of a person who procured it while in New York. . . . I have read it, and with great satisfaction. It is a noble effort, worthy of Dr. Channing. Such a religion as he preaches is equal to the higher mind. Gifted spirits, geniuses, will not turn from it with disgust at its narrowness, puerility, and absurdity, as it seems to me they must from all below this high level. I have myself been considered an infidel in this part of the world; and a thinking and reflecting infidel I have been, almost from a child, to the religion here prevalent. But I should most certainly not wish to be an infidel to such a religion

as Dr. Channing's. I could not read his sermon without excitement. Those who have called me an infidel from my works, have done me an injustice; for they can show nothing of disrespect to such a character of religion as this sermon displays. On the contrary, there are many passages which I will even say, myself, are eloquently religious. I certainly did not write them without emotion and high emotion. Where I have seemed to revolt against religion, it was only that gloomy and absurd and cruel system of orthodoxy which was a torment to me till I rejected it, and which I am sure must be uncomfortable to all, even to its most devoted professors. It is like crowding our free limbs into clothes of iron. I have thought much on the physical argument in support of religion, — the purely physical; and I must confess, I cannot see anything decisive there. My opinion is, that religion is the growth of the feelings. Of course the circumstances in which man is placed must greatly modify his religion. I cannot see the necessity of recurring to a separate first cause for the production of the universe. We know very little of the powers of matter and its operations; and at the same time we know so very much more than we did a century ago, that I do not think we can say at present that the inherent powers of matter are not adequate to all the effects visible to us. But though I freely confess an opinion which some might start from, yet I am as much persuaded that religion is a necessary result of our moral constitution, a spontaneous growth of feeling. Like everything else, it is susceptible of cultivation. The savage sees a separate controlling power in every great operation of nature. The Persian had his good and evil principle. Judaism taught a unity surrounded by a paraphernalia of forms. Christianity, such

as Dr. Channing teaches it, and as he believes it was taught by Christ, teaches a pure and spiritual unity suited to the highest cultivation of our intellectual and moral nature, — the only religion fitted for a philosopher and a poet, in the proper sense of that word. If the great body of Christians are Trinitarian, it must be because pure Christianity, when embraced by the Gentiles, became mixed with their idolatry and polytheism, or else the Gospel itself is not fitted for the most enlightened state of the human mind. Certain I am, that the man who can read Dr. Channing's sermon and then willingly go back to doctrines of less elevation and less purity, deserves to stay there. His mind is in bonds which I do not envy him, however much he hugs them. But this is a place where such doctrines are not to be spoken on the New Haven orthodox. house-top. It would effect little among the people, and greatly discomfort their advocates. They are free here from the pure light of Unitarianism. They love their darkness. They want nothing to light it but the fires of hell. They have a deeply organized system of Jesuitism here, and they will long hold together. The college, too, is orthodox, the centre of education societies and pious youth. I like the place; it is a beautiful town, and the environs are to me delightful; but I am alone among the people. But solitude is to me a second nature.

In a letter to Dr. Hayward, dated New Haven, May 3, 1827, he complains of the English edition of Malte-Brun; and after giving specimens of bad translation, goes on to say: —

“Such is the translation which Longmans' (the publishers) Literary Gazette pronounces faithful and elegant.

So much for book-making and self-puffing. In truth, it sickens me. In examining this translation, I have found such a show of carelessness and ignorance, and such arrant effrontery, in the puffs of hired critics, that it has made me melancholy. Literature is indeed in a pitiable state, completely the slave of mobocracy, the pander of idleness and perverted taste, or the tool of the speculating bookseller. It would be better if kings and nobles were patrons even at the expense of fulsome dedications. 'If the tyranny of one man is intolerable,' says Watson, 'the tyranny of a thousand is a thousand times more so.' The necessity of revising and correcting the translation throughout (for it is a necessity to me, appearing as I do the editor of the edition), this necessity adds much to my labor in a way not contemplated in the contract. The detection and correction of these errors might be of very great service to Walker's edition, and as without it, I shall do all that was required in the contract, retaining the original text (of the English edition) entire, and adding such matter in the form of notes or otherwise as I may judge necessary to adapt the edition to the present state of geographical knowledge, it would seem as if this new labor were deserving of an additional compensation; at least I ought to be allowed for it sufficient time. But I must first receive the English edition, and then I shall prepare and forward the volumes as fast as my other and paramount duties will permit.

"The printing of the Dictionary has not yet commenced. It has been delayed by waiting for paper and types. But they are constantly expecting to begin it. The workmen are ready and the materials are hourly expected. After much delay I have received the

Ready for
the Dic-
tionary.

first proof of *Clio* No. III., publishing by the Carvills. It will be done in very handsome style, and will make over one hundred and fifty pages. I have written for Carey and Lea, but they are rather disposed to reduce my compensation, by putting off part till next year, as they did last year. I write for them for profit, and they must pay me. I sent them only what they requested last year, and yet they would reduce it. I doubt whether I shall send them anything again. What they do not use this year, I shall recall. I was asked to write for a *Souvenir* in New York, but it has fallen through. Your Boston *Souvenirs* (*Memorial* and *Token*) think of supplying themselves by offering prizes. They will get nothing from me. I have made up my mind not to trifle any more with magazines, souvenirs, etc., but to prepare my own volumes well, and get them published, if I can, to my advantage. I am tired of dealing with booksellers, myself. If some friend on whose honor and ability I might rely would take my manuscripts and attend to their publication, it would, I think, give me more spirit to attempt something new and extended than I can have, if I have, besides the exertion of conceiving and executing, the care and vexation of attending to its publication. I do not intend to rely on my literary efforts at all. I am convinced that it is idle to expect any compensation for such literary efforts as I have made; and my success in any new attempt (as at novels or even the more useful class of school-books) is at least doubtful. I have many things to depress me, —
bad health, domestic relations, etc.; still I would not yield. My time for the present year will be too much occupied to think of much beside my necessary employments; but when it has passed, I may find leisure to attempt some-

Will not
write any
more for
magazines,
but will pub-
lish books.

Depression.

thing more worthy of me than I have yet done. For
 His poetry even the longest things I have written were only
 mere frag- short and sudden efforts, without any precon-
 mentary ceived plan, and with very little if any correc-
 efforts. tion. None of them occupied over a fortnight. They
 were rather the turnings of the lyre, broken and irreg-
 ular preludes, than any harmonized flow of music. But
 I would do something better, something formal and fitted
 into one harmonious whole."

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, May 24, 1827.

I received this morning a letter from S. A. Mitchell, a
 publisher in Philadelphia, stating that he was now pub-
 lishing, in the name of A. Finley, an edition of Malte-
 Brun in four volumes, at two dollars a volume. . . . I
 learnt by Mitchell's letter, for the first time, that Walker
 had announced the edition as edited by me. . . . I
 write to you instead of Walker, because I have a confi-
 dence that you will take my place and effect an arrange-
 ment as if I were present. I believe I have communicated
 to you all my difficulties in regard to this edition.

His choice of a third person in his dealings with his
 A character- publisher was characteristic. He had no confi-
 istic. dence in booksellers as a class, and his suspi-
 cions were easily excited. Much of his trouble now and
 earlier and later arose from his fear that they might take
 advantage of him. This want of confidence was due in
 part to his early and unfortunate experience with Mr.
 Maltby and Mr. Wiley in the publication of his poetry.

Dr. Hayward was exceedingly urgent that Percival should criticise Cooper's "Prairie" for the North American Review, wishing to have justice done him and nothing more; but though he had, as has been already seen, a contemptible opinion of Cooper's writings, he had no leisure to prepare such an article. He was now hard at work upon his literary tasks, debating, too, in his own mind, whether he was adequately paid for his services. The work upon the Dictionary had increased from a revision of proof-sheets to a partial correction of the author's manuscript before it was put into the hands of the compositors; and after having been paid more reasonably for his work, he consented to go on. The work on Malte-Brun was also more difficult than it at first appeared. He did not know how hard it was; he was not used to such undertakings; his only experience had been the editing of the *Elegant Extracts*; and now in anticipation that the work would reach seven volumes, he wished one thousand dollars for it. He says of the progress of the work, July 1, 1827:—

"I believe I am now fully aware of all that is necessary in preparing the edition. I have the American edition marked for annotation, though this will be of no use in revision. I have collected a considerable body of materials for notes, and shall give all the best time I can steal from the Dictionary, or rather which the Dictionary will leave me, to finish the task."

To the increased compensation for Malte-Brun Mr. Walker kindly and cheerfully consented. Of his progress in the other work, he wrote at the same time as follows:—

"The Dictionary is *under way*, but *progresses* slowly.

Is urged
to criticise
Cooper for
the North
American
Review.

The work on
the Diction-
ary unex-
pectedly
hard; so also
on Malte-
Brun.

At its present rate of progression, it will be almost a life-interest with me. It obliges me to close and *lengthy* application, but on the whole, it is not an uninteresting or uninstructional employment." *

The Dictionary a life-interest.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, July 11, 1827.

I have felt myself long very unpleasantly situated in regard to this Geography, but I trust it will now be definitely arranged. I do not think I have gained by the change of terms. I had rather have prepared the edition strictly according to the contract for six hundred dollars than as at present arranged for nine hundred dollars. The labor would have been proportionately higher paid. But the present engagement I have consented to, and shall endeavor to adhere to. The present employments in which I am engaged are better paid than I have ever been, but I fear they will prove too severe for me. They are new labor; and as an author I cannot but regret that my books have not been so profitable as to enable me to devote myself to my own pursuits. I have published enough to place me beyond the necessity of mere drudgery, if there was any merit in what I have published deserving of a reward. But I have found that complaint only recoils on the complainant. My time will be too much occupied to think of anything beyond my present engagements. I cannot therefore write any reviews, although I should be very happy to comply with your wishes.

New terms on Malte-Brun not satisfactory.

Cannot write reviews.

* In reply to a friend who once asked him if the Dictionary was not a dry work, he said: "I took more pleasure in editing Webster's Dictionary than in anything else I have done."

Thus with a characteristic infirmity he sees the bad side of a new bargain as soon as it was fairly made. He was anxious for his own reputation that his work should be in every way correct; and this care, even with increased remuneration, did not make his pay proportionately better. He was now to have one hundred and thirty dollars per volume. The second volume was to be delivered in October, 1827, and the succeeding volumes once in two months. Two numbers or parts, as published, were to make a volume. And if the work was increased by having to translate from the original edition in French, Percival was to be paid still more; and as the agreement now stood, he was to receive five hundred dollars in several payments, over and above the compensation per volume, on the completion of the work. The following advertisement, sent out with the first volume, gives some idea of his labor:—

My object in preparing a new edition of Malte-Brun's Geography was, at first, simply to communicate such additional information, and make such corrections in matters of fact, in the form of notes or otherwise, as I might deem important to adapt this edition to the present state of geographical knowledge. As it is some years since the publication of this translation was begun in Great Britain (1821), there was room for improvement in these particulars. The voyages of Parry and the journeys of Franklin and Denham have alone furnished materials for very considerable additions to our previous stock of knowledge. Such were the limits of my engagements; nor did I expect to find myself necessitated to undertake a new task. I took it for granted that the English translation was, what it professed to be,

States his
labors on
Malte-Brun.

faithful and exact. Before commencing my editorial labors, I carefully perused this translation, and, in the course of this perusal, I observed many passages so false and absurd, that I felt confident they could not have been so written in the original. I procured a copy of the original, and, on comparison, I found my previous opinions confirmed, and that every passage which I had marked was a mistranslation.

Convinced of the inaccuracy of the English translation, I have revised it on the original, and I must say that the amount of its errors has surprised me. Scarce a page is without its mistakes, and many pages are literally crowded with them. Any one, interested in observing them, may compare this edition with the Boston 8vo edition, which has faithfully followed the English edition, even in the greater part of its typographical errors. Any one who makes such a comparison cannot fail to observe the difference, particularly in Books VII. – XII. inclusive; and in Books XX. and XXI. I do not choose to make these assertions without proof, and for this purpose I have collected a number of the more important errors, in which I have given, first, the original; then, the English translation; and, lastly, my own revision. The reader will see, from these examples, that the errors are by no means trifling. I have endeavored to give the exact meaning of the original in every instance, and, if I have failed in point of elegance, I trust I have not in accuracy.

“C'est après les substances volcaniques qu'il convient de nommer celles qui *doivent* à l'action des incendies souterrains *des dépôts de charbon de terre.*” — p. 271.

A comparison of editions. “It is proper, after volcanic substances, to mention those which *owe* to the action of subterraneous fires *their deposits of coal.*” — p. 262.

It is proper, after volcanic substances, to mention those which *owe their origin* to subterraneous fires *in beds of coal*; e. g. *porcelain jasper.*

"We may consider the lofty and steep mountains of Arabia Felix as the link which connects the mountains of Lupata with the plateaus and mountains of Persia, *on the side of Thibet*." — pp. 175, 176.

We may consider the lofty and steep mountains of Arabia Felix as the link which connects the mountains of Lupata with the plateaus and mountains of Persia, *which come from Thibet*.

"—— on n'y trouve que de petites falaises calcaires." — p. 179.

"—— consisting chiefly of calcareous matter." — p. 171.

—— we find there only low limestone bluffs.

"—— d'anciennes côtes par collines." — p. 179.

"—— the ancient sides of low hills." — p. 171.

—— coasts originally formed by hills.

"Les côtes escarpées et dentelées: elles sont ceintes de rochers, soit au-dessus, soit au-dessous de l'eau." — p. 178.

"We have those which are abrupt and broken, and as it were notched, formed by various masses of rocks united at their bases, either above or beneath the surface of the water." — p. 170.

Steep and indented coasts: these are girt with rocks, either above or below the surface of the water.

"Rarement on voit les hautes vallées *s'élargir* successivement et s'identifier peu à peu avec les plaines. *La plupart du tems* elles sont presque barrées par un angle saillant de la chaîne de montagnes qui leur sert de ceinture." — p. 176.

"In a few instances these high valleys *have been* observed to *enlarge themselves at different and successive periods*, and gradually to become identified with the plains. *They have been for ages* almost completely barred, and confined by some projecting angle of the chain of mountains, which girds them in." — p. 169.

In a few instances these high valleys *are* observed to *widen* gradually, and so to become identified with the plains. *They are usually* almost completely barred, and confined by some projecting angle of the chain of mountains which girds them in. — This I consider a memorable example.

"La construction des deux problèmes précédens demande, par rapport à la réduction des lieues parcourues dans le sens *est et ouest*, en degrés de longitude, l'emploi *des tables des latitudes croissantes*," etc. — p. 143.

"The construction of the two preceding problems requires, with respect to the reduction of leagues gone over in the direction *east and west*, in degrees of longitude, the employment *for the tables for measuring latitudes*," etc. — p. 137.

The construction of the two preceding problems requires, with respect to the reduction of leagues gone over in the direction east and west, *to degrees of longitude, the employment of the tables of increasing latitudes, etc.*

“—— à négliger.” — p. 113. —— “in regulating.” — p. 109. —— in neglecting.

I have given the above as examples of the inaccuracies in the English translation. I might have increased the number to a much greater amount; but these will suffice to substantiate the assertion that the translation is by no means an accurate one. I have attempted to correct this evil, and I trust I have, at least in part, succeeded. The present edition will, therefore, not only contain a body of notes, embracing such additional information and corrections of fact as I have thought essential, but an entire revision of the translation on the original.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

August 14, 1827.

Of his new volume he also says : —

“It will be out in a few days. I do not expect to reap from it either fame or money; but it will be out in a volume, and that will be something. It will be very handsomely executed. I share profits, and of course I do not expect a great dividend. I do not calculate on any. I told you in one of my last that John Miller had written me on his edition. He told me it had not taken, most of the edition remained unsold, and that he had lost one hundred pounds by it. I must truly say I have not one solitary outward motive for taking another step in literature, — not one; but this will, I trust, rather increase the internal impulse. It will act like persecution. I want leisure and support. I must gain them both by labor, and then I will have a literary

His new
volume.

vacation, at least till I have added something to the ten hundred and sixty pages (not repeated) which I have already published. What I may write this year, if anything, will be only fugitive, such jets as may escape from the safety-valve of my imagination. For this year must be devoted to raising the steam, and then I will try a long voyage. Four years ago, while here, I wrote a translation of Æschylus's Prometheus. I have it by His translation of Prometheus. That I intend as the basis of my first volume, in which I will gather the powers of many Helicons, with some of my own, or at least some that will rise in my own soil, although the seed may be borrowed from another."

The following criticism of this number of *Clio* is taken from the *Southern Review* for May, 1828. It is in the trenchant style of a young magazine, though its criticisms are spiced with a good deal of truth:—

"We think Mr. Percival capable of arriving at a high degree of excellence in a certain species of It is criticised in the Southern Review, poetry. We do not, indeed, consider him as a man either of great genius or of profound sensibility. In the volume before us, he has touched upon several subjects calculated to call forth his pathos, if he had any. We see nothing more than a certain tender and poetic pensiveness, which, although a very pretty thing, is still very distinct from the agonies and energies of deep passion. In this respect, Mr. Percival resembles, in some measure, another of our men of talent, we mean Washington Irving, who (whether it be heresy or not, we will say it) appears to us to have much more sentimentalism than sensibility. But Mr. Percival's diction is, in many instances, highly poetical, especially when he is revelling in visions of Oriental magnificence, or

painting (as he loves to do) the soft beauties and balmy fragrance of some delicious Southern climate. We think him fitted to excel in this sort of description."

In December, 1827, a writer in the American Quarterly Review, criticising the third number of And in the American Quarterly. Clio, made the following very just remarks: "Unlike the poets of highest renown, Mr. Percival holds more intercourse with nature than with his own race. The clouds, and the mountains, and the ever-changing and yet eternal beauties of the earth, are his delight. His Muse meditates in loneliness. He tells us more of his own sensations when his mind is wrought upon by poetic excitement than of the sympathies of others. It is a metaphysical passion for nature; a sublime and self-denying and almost misanthropic spirit of meditation; an indifference to the great mass of men, that we most frequently meet in his poetry." Of his popularity the writer says: "While some of Mr. Percival's shorter poems have been general favorites, his longer pieces have been almost as a sealed book." "We acknowledge his superior powers, the profusion with which he pours forth the most varied imagery, the richness and the charm of his diction, the elevated sentiments and train of thought in his poetry; we delight to bear our testimony to his surpassing merit; and yet his volumes are hardly favorites, and, except, perhaps, a few of his shorter efforts, excite admiration rather than impart pleasure. They awaken a respect for the genius of the writer, rather than the enthusiasm which the best poets know how to kindle." And passing to a minuter criticism, in which he dwells upon Percival's well-known peculiarities, he says: "Of the sonnets, several are highly wrought and of great delicacy. Among the smaller pieces, there are not a few that seem to us to

be of very great merit. What can be more beautiful of the kind than the *Reign of May*? — a poem which we should quote entire, but that it has already been printed so often, and which is written in the true spirit of one that intimately communes with nature, and understands her beauties.” “On the whole, we think this volume gives evidence of a great variety of powers, extensive studies, and an earnest effort to improve them. It is superior to either of the former numbers of *Clio*; it is one of the best volumes of poetry that have appeared among us; and though posterity may take but a little of it, still it contains very valuable contributions to the permanent literature of the country.”

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, August 14, 1827.

My time is very fully occupied with the Dictionary. I ought not really to have so much on my hands His hands full of work. as at present. It has arisen from circumstances which I did not foresee and could not calculate on. I engaged in the *Geography* with the expectation of having a correct translation, and in the *Dictionary* with the expectation of having my labors confined to a mere correction of proofs. These two tasks would have been enough for once, and as much as I ought to engage in. But now the entire revision of the translation in the one, and a new and necessary task in the other, have greatly increased my labors; and although my time is lengthened, it is all but too much for me. Besides, I am not paid in proportion to my additional labor. Still I will force my way through, if possible. I suppose I must make up my mind

to such pursuits for life ; but if so, I will engage less at once ; at least, I will leave myself some leisure, which I value more than any emoluments I can ever expect from anything I can do.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, August 28, 1827.

I have observed in the Boston Lyceum * some rather ungracious allusions to my present employment here. It seems they cannot allow me to be quiet in any employment. I do not think my present employment of correcting blunders is a very elevated one, yet it is at least not a useless nor an idle one. I am doing more service to my country than they may imagine. It may be a negative service in itself, yet in its results it will prove a positive service. I should be very weak to regard every idle personal remark like that, yet I cannot but wish that even the writer of that had no occasion for it ; for my present employment is not one I covet at all. Both my tasks are unpleasant. They add nothing to my mind or its facilities. They are mere labor ; but they accustom me to patience. I yield to them because I have no hope of making my literary talents my means even of bare subsistence. You may perhaps think me wrong in this, but it is a persuasion which I fear will never leave me. For this reason I have made up my mind to yield myself to serviceable labor. In this way I can at least say I have something that is my own.

* This was edited by Frederic S. Hill, an aspiring young man who dealt in literature till he could do better elsewhere.

The demands made in the following letter were very cordially yielded to by Mr. Converse, the contractor for the Dictionary, so that Percival ^{Relations of Percival to Dr. Webster.} went on without further difficulty. And yet I may add that Percival's relations to the author, Dr. Webster, were not always the pleasantest. They both had a good degree of independence and firmness; and it was Percival's peculiarity that when he thought he was right, nothing could change him. He was a much more thorough scholar in etymologies and the scientific bearings of words than Dr. Webster; and this can be truly said without disparagement. Hence he held on to his opinions with great tenacity, and was unwilling that any words should pass through his hands, unless they were correctly defined and set forth in every particular. Dr. Webster did not regard such accuracy as absolutely necessary, and his time was too valuable to be wasted in controversies. It is not strange, therefore, that Percival and Dr. Webster often parted, at the Doctor's study, both thoroughly vexed at each other, nor that finally these disputes over literary inaccuracies, through Percival's honest zeal and Dr. Webster's honest pride of position, should ultimately, as they did, lead Percival to discontinue his labors.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, December 4, 1827.

I must give up my engagement with the Dictionary, or it must be essentially modified. I cannot any longer endure the labor I have gone through. ^{His daily work.} I will give my occupation for two days in getting out one

sheet. I begin (say Monday morning) at seven o'clock, A. M., with reading the first proof from the manuscript, and get it ready for the printer by five o'clock, P. M. I cannot do it in less time. Then as soon as I can set about it, I take up the manuscript for the next sheet, about which I am often occupied till nine or ten o'clock. This depends on the amount of revision. I am then quite exhausted enough to go to bed. I take the manuscript next morning early to the author and make revisions on his authorities, and settle with him the corrections. This occupies till ten o'clock, sometimes eleven or more. I immediately sit down then to the second proof, which I complete by three o'clock at least; after that I have to make two revisions,—one at the press,—so that it is often seven o'clock before all is finished. I have then an evening's leisure. This has been my employment for most of six months; and I am now done with it. I cannot, and will not go through twenty months at least of such incessant labor; for it will take fully that time to finish. The world may cry out what they choose; but when I find myself bound by Gordian knots, I will cut them. Some arrangement must be made to lighten my task, or I shall resign it entirely. It is not necessary that I should do all this; but my assistance, or that of some one as competent, is absolutely necessary. Perhaps I have done wrong in stating this to you, but I rely on your not betraying me. My situation is therefore one of disgust and toil. . . . I regret that I have ever engaged in the thing. It will be one of the miseries of my life to think of it; and I pray that I may find a safe deliverance. As I find it, I appear to be obliged to correct the blunders of ignorance. I feel like the living

Wishes a new
arrangement
with the
Dictionary.

Dr. Webster
as a lexi-
cographer.

He longs to
cut loose
from the
work.

tied to the dead; but even the Geography is far better than the Dictionary, as a task. I have grasped at too much employment; but I am in some measure excusable, from the fact that the work has doubled on my hands, from circumstances I could not foresee. I did hope, however, to force myself through the whole, partly that it might not be said I had not fulfilled my engagements, partly to gain the reward. That would have left me enough to purchase a little house of my own, of which I might say, with Achilles, —

ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε
 ἔχων ἐπεὶ κεκάμω;

or with Ariosto,

Parva, sed apta mihi
 parta meo sed tamen ære domus.

But I will give up that for the present, and perhaps there is little really desirable in it. I shall be careful hereafter not to engage till I know all the ground before me; and not to engage in anything that will not leave my time mainly to myself. I am content to be poor, but I will not drudge all my time for money. I have not been uninfluenced in this seeming eagerness for it by a regard for another than myself. I have been deeply touched by the misconduct of one near relation towards another; but I do not wish to particularize. I can do nothing, however, but regret it. If I get clear of the Dictionary, I shall not fall back with the Geography; if I do not, I really fear I cannot accomplish it; at least I must have my time to do it in.

Dr. Hayward wrote in reply: "I hope you will not break off with the Dictionary before you write to me;

and I think if you are dealing with gentlemen, the task might be made much lighter to you. At the same time, I must confess that I should be very sorry to think that it would be nearly two years before you could visit us here." He continued upon the work, but was relieved of some of the more onerous duties, while his pay remained the same. His reply shows a more cheerful spirit.

Dr. Hayward
urges him
to con-
tinue.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, January 9, 1828.

I have made some more favorable arrangement with the Dictionary, by which I am relieved from most of the mechanical part of my task, and I now hope to respire from my excessive labors. I need it in body and spirit. The Dictionary is still an odious task to me. . . .

He gains re-
lief, but likes
his work no
better.

I will now detain you a little while with my literary notions. As for myself, my literary talents are even suffering in dim eclipse, and often I fear there will be no future emersion. I will not conceal from you that I lead a very solitary and cheerless life, with no other companion but my toils. Could I enjoy the society of my books, I think I might be better satisfied, — *sed ineptias aliorum* *semper corrigere valde durum est*. You have a new star in your horizon, N. P. Willis, Esq., and I presume your wise men of the East have gone to worship him. I think him very clever in his way, but he is wholly an artificial thing, — Wordsworth and Mrs. Hemans lackadaisified, just as I observed that L. E. L. was a dilution of Tom Moore; and yet he

Mr. N. P.
Willis and
other Ameri-
can authors.

writes smoothly and prettily, sometimes even beautifully; and yet at times, oh how weak! During a night he says, "The moonlight is not heard." "God help thee, silly one," as Canning said to Southey. The current poetry of the time, particularly in this country, is full of such things. Bryant, H. G. Mellen, Longfellow, Jones, Willis, R. H. Dana (but though similar, rather different), *et hoc genus omne*, and oh, what a sameness! but one hand, varying as any hand might, even on a single sheet. Study, *labor limæ*, exact conformity to the best models, but yet how lifeless in general. I may have written so at times, but not always. If I have, it is one of my remembered iniquities. I am ready to ask the pardon of Apollo for it, on the very knees of my heart.

One spirit-stirring thing has happened since I last wrote you, — the battle of Navarino, or rather the news. I heard it with the sincerest joy. I hate all war, ^{A prophecy confirmed.} but that was the retribution of strict justice. Let the allies go on, and put the world at peace. They have the power and can do it; and then intelligence will work up, in spite of them. In relation to that affair, I refer you to my Greece from Mount Helicon. It was written in May, 1826. It now seems to me almost like a prophecy.

The late George P. Morris was at this time the editor of the New York Mirror, a slender literary periodical. He conceived the plan of publishing in a single number "the likenesses of nine living American poets," with accompanying biographical details. Percival ^{His portrait asked for.} was included in the number, and was asked to allow his portrait to be engraved, the one which Alexander had painted in 1825, while he was residing in Bos-

ton, and to furnish memoranda for a sketch of his life. He consented; and when the print was published, his own likeness occupied the centre of the group. The tuneful nine, including Percival, were Bryant, Sprague, Pierpont, Irving, Woodworth, Brooks, Pinckney, and Halleck. These were then our most promising poets. Who of them, save Percival, Bryant, Halleck, and Irving, are known as American authors now? Such is the caprice of reputation. It is amusing to learn from Mr. Morris concerning Percival, that "in manners he resembles Addison, in disposition the eccentric and excellent Goldsmith, and in mind he possesses the herculean vigor of Johnson combined with the tuneful equability of Pope."

In the following letter he compares his labors upon the Dictionary with the Geography:—

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, June 9, 1828.

I have still engagements with the Dictionary. When fully employed on the Dictionary, I receive ninety-five dollars per month. If I could entirely finish a volume in a month, the Geography would have some advantage. But if it exceeds a month by more than eleven days, then the advantage is on the side of the Dictionary, so far as mere profit is concerned. I have yet to learn that I can complete a volume in a month, even laboring as I did on the Dictionary,—an experiment which I shall hardly be willing to try again. I have injured my health by what I have done. But I have never compared the present arrangement for the

The work on
the Diction-
ary and the
Geography
compared.

Geography with the Dictionary (I do not wish to compare anything with the Dictionary, it is unique in all its bearings), but only with the former arrangement; and I still say, I consider myself as speaking within reasonable limits, when I assert that I could have prepared the edition according to the first arrangement (doing all required faithfully) in one third the time now required, — the increase of compensation being only fifty per cent, of time three hundred. I say this after completing four volumes.





CHAPTER XV.

1829-1831.

THE DICTIONARY COMPLETED. — HIS HOME IN BERLIN. — HIS WILL.
— TROUBLE WITH A PUBLISHER. — PROPOSALS FROM WASHINGTON.
— MALTE-BRUN FINISHED.



HE engagement upon the Dictionary terminated in the early autumn of this year. It had been to him a severely laborious work; and though he separated from it before it was entirely finished, owing to misunderstanding between himself and Dr. Webster, it was a welcome release.

In the mean time, he was looking about for a home in which he might invest his earnings from the Dictionary, to which he might take his mother, and where his brothers would also be welcome. The place he had selected was the house formerly occupied by Dr. Ward, the physician in whose library he had gained his earliest introduction to the study of medicine. It was in Kensington parish; and he removed there with his library in September or October of this same year. A little earlier than this, in writing to his mother about the proposed change, he says of himself: "My health is not strong. I can do much if I take it moderately, but I do not intend to drive myself as I have done for the last two years."

His only occupation in the new home was the Geography; and this, from the delay in issuing the numbers in

England, was not exacting. His property now was mainly his library, to which he had recently made large additions in foreign books relating to the study of language, and the house which he had paid for with his late earnings. He was in a more prosperous condition than he had been for years. Though his income had partially stopped with the release from his engagement on the Dictionary, he had money before him; and when his time was not fully taken up with labor, he employed himself in sending ^{Writes for the Connecticut Journal.} poetical and sometimes prose contributions to the Connecticut Journal, then under the charge of Lucius K. Dow. For these he was paid; and many of them were afterwards published in his last poetical volume, the "Dream of a Day, and other Poems," in 1843.

A document before me, dated Berlin, Conn., April 7, 1829, contains his will. At his decease, if his mother survived him, she was to have ^{His will.} "the sole use and benefit" of his estate, and "if anything should remain after her death, or in case she should not survive me, then I give and bequeath all my personal property so remaining in the one case, and all without reserve in the other, to the Medical Society of Connecticut, to be employed in paying a prize or prizes for the best dissertation or dissertations on the best means and method of the physical and physico-moral education of children, from the earliest infancy, so as to form the soundest constitution and the best-regulated habits; believing that an enlightened physician should be the best judge of health and morals, and that no other inquiry can be of more vital importance. And this disposition of my property I make, on condition that my executors, Eli Ives, M. D., and George Hayward, M. D., be associated as judges in the distribution of said prize or prizes. It is my will and

testament that no other disposition of my personal property be made whatever." He added a codicil, that his property, in case it should be found sufficient, should also be used in publishing these dissertations. It may be here said that, at his own wish, his property was otherwise disposed of at his death; but this will is interesting, as showing his thought and purpose at this time.

He did not remain long in Kensington. In April, 1829, he was making inquiries in regard to an office which he might rent in New Haven. He finally obtained one in Broadway, which he occupied until he became engaged in the Geological Survey of Connecticut. His position as a man of enlarged views in every department of science had now gone abroad, and his opinions were often sought upon a great variety of subjects. The elder Silliman requested him to become a paid contributor to the *Journal of Science*,* then in its infancy; and from that time, few men, eminent in any branch of letters or science, spent any time in New Haven without paying their respects to Percival and Professor Silliman.

The work upon the Geography was still going on, but Percival was greatly annoyed at the imperfect readings of the proof-sheets. As the successive numbers came out, they were found to have many typographical errors, and nothing was to him more vexatious than these. He wrote in confidence to Dr. Hayward that it was as he "had anticipated." And then again he was dissatisfied with his pay. It was not enough. He said: "My compensation for the whole work ought to be sixteen hundred dollars, and unless that is secured to me I cannot go on." At this crisis Dr.

At work on the Geography, but annoyed.

* Appendix E.

Hayward, finding it difficult to be the poet's literary manager, placed the matter directly and entirely in Mr. Walker's hands; and he, surprised at the seeming vacillation of his editor, wrote him a sharp letter, in which he intimated that he was legally bound to complete the work, and that unless he did so, he should resort to the law to compel him to. Mr. Walker could not understand Percival's difficulties in the correction of *Malte-Brun*, his care that every part of the work should be authentic and complete; and he was perhaps specially annoyed that Percival should always transact all business with him through his friend Dr. Hayward. He was in a hurry to have the task completed; and Percival was the last man to be hurried. At the close of his letter, Mr. Walker said: "If you should cease to be the editor, before the *Geography* is finished, the public will have due notice thereof." This cut Percival to the quick, and he immediately sat down and wrote the following letter, in which the facts are stated from his point of view:—

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, August 27, 1829.

DEAR SIR, —

I received a letter from S. Walker this morning, informing me that you had delivered him the letter I lately wrote you, and that you had declined answering it. I cannot reply to his letter, and I cannot but express my surprise and regret that you should have taken the course you have done. But after what has passed, I cannot expect any attention to any fair claims on my part, or that any fair construction

Trouble between him
and Mr.
Walker.

will be put upon the course I have taken in my private correspondence with you, or on the real value of my services. Under such circumstances, I am entirely willing to retire from the work, nor do I fear from the judgments of disinterested persons who know all the circumstances. I stand ready to deliver to Walker all the materials I have on hand immediately. I have done something on the sixth volume; but rather than go on, under such circumstances, I would choose to lose all the labor I have given to it. I cannot excuse myself for having shown want of respect. I have intended none to you, but I have found it necessary to speak plainly and decisively. I again say, I need at least two months to prepare a volume as it should be prepared. The sum I have just fixed is but a trifle more compensation than what was secured to me several months before the work began, and before the difficulties of it were at all understood or even suspected, for simply reading the proofs of the Dictionary and seeing that the manuscript was correctly printed. It was hard for me to give my time after this to a much more difficult and responsible task for a less compensation, and fixing the sum which I did. I merely calculated the time which I knew was necessary for me, and regulated the compensation by that of a proof-reader, allowing a little for increased responsibility and contingencies; for parts of the Geography which cannot be foreseen are more difficult than others, and require a longer time, so that two months is at least a *minimum* allowance for time. I again give my calculation: nine volumes, at two months per volume, is eighteen months; at \$80 per month, the sum secured me for proof-reading is \$1,440, or \$160 per volume, allowing for responsibility and all. I put it at \$180; and this I think a fair compensation, and one corresponding to the

sums allowed other literary men in similar undertakings. I said such a one had been offered me. I was offered the abridgment of Webster's Dictionary, and for this I should have been paid \$1,500; but I could not at that time engage, on account of this engagement. It was offered me winter before last, when I had prepared only three volumes of the Geography. That sum has been paid for it; and I have no hesitation in saying, it would have been an easier task than the Geography. Were this sum of \$1,600 secured to me, I would have corrected the proofs; indeed, this ought to have been a part of the original engagement, for it is hardly possible that a book would be correctly printed from manuscript, without the author's corrections or those of one as competent; and I can say, without hesitation, from the nature of the errors in the copy as now printed, that such correction was not employed in this case. I need not tell you in what a very disagreeable light I must be placed before the public, with my name sanctioning such errors as I have found in the copy, after what I had professed to undertake in my advertisement, and after the great pains I know I had given to make the work correct. But I could not sacrifice so much of my time as the correction would have required for nothing, especially when I felt myself overburdened by the task I had already on hand. I am very sorry to see the course you have taken in this case. That you should have delivered over to Walker my private, confidential correspondence, and pointed out the passages most favorable to him, without reference to those of a contrary character, which are necessary to a full understanding of the case (one of difficult compromise), I cannot explain. Indeed, my letters could not be fully understood without a knowledge of our confidential verbal intercourse

on the subject. I need not tell you again how much I was influenced at first by a particular circumstance I have detailed to you. That you should have taken advantage of a most painful misfortune to me, which might have induced me to engage even when I knew it was not for what I was justly entitled, and when I so declared it,—that you should have taken advantage of this to press me to the *grindstone*, especially when I have so repeatedly declared since that I have been disappointed in my expectations, and that the work has proved much more difficult than I had anticipated from the first volume, I must say is very disagreeable to me. I had applied and reapplied so long that my patience was exhausted. I say now that, if the terms I have here proposed are fairly considered and allowed, I am ready to go on with as little interruption as circumstances will allow, but if not, taking all the circumstances into account, I stand ready to resign at once, and meet the consequences. I know they will be disagreeable; perhaps an appeal to the public will be necessary; at any rate, I must exonerate myself from the errors of the work as printed. The work, as it now is, has been a burden to me rather than an advantage. Other things I might say, if I thought they would be fairly construed; but after what has passed, I cannot hope it. If you refuse to answer this, I shall consider the business on my part as ended, and will return the materials by the first opportunity.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE HAYWARD, M. D.

The effect of these letters was to bring both parties to a better understanding; and by the kind management of

Dr. Hayward, who knew well Percival's incapacity for business, Mr. Walker was made to see the difficulty in the way of peace; and to the credit ^{Dr. Hayward helps to} make peace. of both, it should be said, that Percival's friendship with Dr. Hayward was not broken, and that Mr. Walker ever after treated him in all his letters with marked kindness and respect. Dr. Hayward, in urging Percival to confidence in Mr. Walker, says: "It really seems to me that he is willing to do everything that you can ask or wish. And when you consider that it is really more for his interest than yours that you should complete the work, I confess that I am surprised that you should have any suspicion or uneasiness about it." In Percival's reply, he said: "I should regret it very much if you supposed me distrustful of your readiness to favor me in my affairs relating to the Geography. On the contrary, I am very sensible of it, and only regret there should be any necessity on my part to cause you the trouble you have taken on my account; the more so, as I know not that I shall have it in my power to give you a like return."

In the delay caused by the tardy appearance of the Geography in England, he lacked employment; and none being offered to him, he wrote a letter of inquiry to Professor Ticknor, in reply to which he received the following:—

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

Boston, July 6, 1830.

DEAR SIR,—

I received, three weeks since, a letter from you, asking if I could suggest some profitable literary occupation; and I have since made inquiry to ascer-

Letter from
Mr. Ticknor.

tain here whether any such is now offered. Thus far, I am sorry to say, I have been entirely unsuccessful; but I do not despair, because I know such things are often unexpectedly presented. In the mean time, however, I write to you to say that my friend Mr. Walsh (R. Walsh, Jr.) of Philadelphia was lately writing me, and I suggested to him what you might desire. He thought he could assist you; and you may think it worth while to write to him on the subject, and from him learn what can be looked for in Philadelphia that would suit you.

Yours very sincerely,

GEO. TICKNOR.

Percival immediately wrote to Mr. Walsh, who desired him to write for his Review, the American Quarterly; he also endeavored to find him employment among
1830. the booksellers in Philadelphia; but I cannot find that he wrote for the Review. Reviewing was not congenial to him, and the booksellers had nothing to offer.

At the invitation of his old friend Jeremy L. Cross, he now contributed a series of papers on Natural
Papers on Natural History. History, one of his earliest and favorite studies, to the Sabbath School Herald,* then published in New Haven. They were gracefully written, and if not fully adapted to children, were yet a very agreeable introduction to the study of Natural History "in its intellectual, moral, and religious bearings," for mature minds. He also edited an English publication, "The Wonders of the World," for Sidney Babcock, a bookseller in New Haven, and the publisher of his Clio No. I., for which he received one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

While still waiting, with the unfinished Geography

* Appendix F.

upon his hands, for literary employment, he received a letter from General Duff Green, of Washington, 1831.
the contents of which he communicated to Professor Ticknor, asking his advice:—

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

NEW HAVEN, May 9, 1831.

DEAR SIR, —

I have just had a proposition made to me, which in my present situation requires some consideration on my part, and on which I feel particularly desirous to obtain your opinion. General Duff Green, of the Washington Telegraph, has proposed to me to connect myself editorially with him at Washington. He has proposed to establish a periodical, "The United States Army and Navy Journal," on the plan of the United Service Journal in England, of which he has requested me to become the editor. He says he has already obtained quite a large number of subscribers. He would also be glad of my assistance in the literary and miscellaneous departments of the Telegraph. Such is the language he has used to me in his propositions. He has requested me to inform him in two or three weeks whether I will accede to them, and on what terms. These are offers somewhat calculated to excite the spirit of adventure; yet I can truly say that I should at once decline them, if I could feel assured of a regular continuance of such literary employments as I have been engaged in. These employments have been and are now very uncertain to me. I have some years realized a sufficient sum from them, but the last two years

Proposals
from Gen-
eral Duff
Green.

His poverty.

have been very barren. The last year my income from literary employment has been only sixty-five dollars, and I have been all the time in search of new employment without success. I have now no prospect of such employments on which I can calculate. The employments on which I have been last engaged have been difficult and laborious, but concealed. That with the Dictionary gave me no opportunity of exhibiting myself to advantage. The good I did, whether positive or negative in preventing evil, all went to another's advantage, but was lost to me. The Geography is of a similar character. No one can form a conception of the most difficult part of my task, without closely comparing my edition with the English edition and the original,—a labor which probably not one of my readers will undertake. The publisher, also, is an improper person. He circulates his work principally by agents, in ninepenny numbers, among the less intelligent classes (not a single copy have I seen in bookstores, and only a single copy in the hands of subscribers, and that not till last Saturday). Several of the earlier numbers (about four to eleven inclusive) were printed without my correcting the proofs (no fault of mine), and of course very inaccurately. When I discovered this, I insisted on forming a table of errata to be circulated by the first number issued after it was prepared. This the publisher consented to do. I prepared the table (an extensive one), saw it printed, and corrected the proofs; but in the only copy I have since seen, it has not yet made its appearance. I have (perhaps erroneously) partly attributed to these circumstances my want of success in procuring other literary employment. At any rate, I am now in a situation in which some change is necessary. I do not wish to change my residence or pur-

suits. I altogether prefer an independent literary employment as author or editor (not of periodicals, but Wishes employment as editor of new editions of books. of new editions of books) to any such employment as this just proposed at Washington. I do not of choice feel inclined to a residence in Washington. I have not been accustomed to regard General Green or his party with much complacency, although his recent change of position is rather more in his favor in my views. I have very imperfect notions of the security of a connection with him, or of the amount of compensation which one should require for such an engagement. At a time when my literary prospects are altogether in abeyance, this proposition (not altogether without promise) is made me. I have stated several circumstances connected with my situation and feelings, which may have some influence in deciding the question. Still I should peculiarly value your opinion as to the course I ought to pursue, and should be much obliged if you would give it me as soon as you can conveniently.

Yours with much respect,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE TICKNOR.

Professor Ticknor replied as follows:—

TO JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

Boston, May 11, 1831.

DEAR SIR,—

Yours of the 9th came last evening; and I have carefully considered its contents. Of Mr. Duff Letter from Professor Ticknor. Green I know nothing; and of his political course I think just as you do. Yet, if his offers are lib-

eral, and you are satisfied that they may be depended upon, I do not see why you should not accept them, saving only your disinclination to the sort of labor he proposes and the place where it is to be done; of which you must be the sole judge. But I should expect a good deal of liberality in his propositions, and perfect explicitness, in writing, as to their meaning and construction. With this and frequent pecuniary adjustments with him, you would be safe enough, I should think, even if his speculations in politics, newspapers, and books should not turn out successfully. I should, however, expect a good living out of my engagements with him.

I do not know that I can add anything more, except my hearty wishes for your success, and a sincere desire to contribute to it.

Very truly your friend and servant,
GEO. TICKNOR.

It was now proposed to him by some Boston publishers
June, 1831. to prepare a popular Geography, which should
Urged to pre- cost, including maps and engravings, five or six
pare a popu- dollars a volume; and he wrote to Dr. Hayward,
lar Geogra- phy, inquiring the character and means of the parties
ph, proposing to engage in it:—

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, June 30, 1831.

A proposition has been recently made me to engage in
Which the a literary undertaking, which I think may be of
Griffin very considerable importance to me, by C. S. D.
Brothers are to publish. Griffin and B. T. Griffin of Boston. As I am
entirely unacquainted with them, and as it is important

to me in this affair that they should be honorable and responsible men, — men whose stability and integrity may be permanently relied on, — you will much oblige me by communicating to me soon whatever you may know or learn of them in that respect. My impression is, that if they are such men as I can safely deal with, a fair field may be opened to me in the proposed undertaking. It will require considerable time to prepare the work proposed; and it is then intended to be one in which I may have a permanent interest, and in which my profits will depend on its success. In such an undertaking I, of course, wish to proceed with the greatest caution. My reliance on your caution and good wishes induces me to make this application.

It was found that the publishers were young men, but trustworthy; yet for some reason unexplained the proposition was not followed up. The work given up.

The welcome news came to him, now, that the ninth and last volume of Malte-Brun was being published in England. In publishing the nineteenth part of the work, he issued the following advertisement: —

I take this occasion to inform the public that the principal delay in the progress of this edition has arisen from the London publishers, nearly a Malte-Brun completed. year having elapsed between my receiving the first and second numbers of volume eighth. The public may be assured that no delay has been or will be caused by me, beyond what is necessary in preparing the edition. The manner in which the revision has been made by me will doubtless sufficiently explain the delay which has been thus occasioned.

J. G. PERCIVAL.

The Geography had been on his hands, at this time, about five years; a loss to both publisher and editor in the protracted time required for its completion. As soon as the English copy could be imported, it was placed in Percival's hands, and he speedily completed its revision.

Mr. Walker
bankrupt.

But the work, unfortunate in the delay in its publication, helped to involve Mr. Walker in bankruptcy, and consequently to deprive Percival of the earnings, on which, at this needy time, he placed so much dependence.





CHAPTER XVI.

1831-1834.

STUDIES IN LANGUAGE. — A POETICAL SUMMONS AND HIS REPLY. — ATTEMPTS A NEW EDITION OF HIS POETRY. — LETTERS TO PROFESSOR TICKNOR. — HIS POVERTY. — IN SEARCH OF LITERARY EMPLOYMENT. — GOES TO BOSTON. — FAILURE TO PUBLISH HIS POEMS. — ENGAGES TO WRITE THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. — HIS GERMAN VERSES. — CONFESSIONS OF A LINGUIST. — THE BASQUE.

N numerous ways, through the friends of former years, he now tried to find employment; but nothing offered itself. In this enforced leisure he turned to his favorite studies, the languages, and found relief to his mind, in his poverty-stricken condition, in exploring the ^{His studies} ^{in language.} intricacies of philology.

“He was one of the first in our country to revel in that latest and only scientific mode of studying languages, which has received the name of *linguistic science*. Bopp, Grimm, and others of the profound Germans were imported by him, and had long been his familiar companions, before either their names or their discoveries had been heard of by most of our ablest professors of language. And linguistic science became to him the key to infinitely more than a dry and barren knowledge of words. It not only classified the wondrously varied tribes of men, according to their mutual relations of descent and con-

sanguinity, but it became the foundation of that philosophy which unlocked for him, as a student of mankind, the inmost recesses of the human heart. As a scholar he could thus appreciate the degree of culture of various nations, as shown in their literature, and as a poet could enter into a warm and intimate sympathy with them as brethren of the human family.

“He excelled especially in the study of the European
Excels in the
European
languages. languages. Into this study he was led by his poetic impulses; the interest with which he regarded the early efforts in literature of the less advanced peoples being derived from other causes than their intrinsic merit. In addition to the French, Italian, and Spanish of his earlier years, he delighted in constantly adding to his stores of German, ancient as well as modern, expressing in it his choicest thoughts and feelings. Not content with gratifying his romantic tastes through the study of the Gaelic and Welsh, and his curiosity and sympathy with the stern and heroic by mastering the Norse, Danish, and Swedish, he was indefatigable in his devotion to the Slavonic tongues, with the poetry of which, more particularly, he was unwearied in making himself familiar. The more uncouth the appearance and the sound, the greater was his zest in overcoming the sense of strangeness by the most minute linguistic study, and by persevering till he felt at ease, and, as it were, among friends with whom he could sympathize. The Russians were found to be unexpectedly interesting, from the tenderness of sentiment among their peasantry; the vigor and spirit of the Polish did not disappoint him; the Hungarian Magyars were peculiar as well as wild; and in the Servians he took extreme delight. As a linguistic student, it was a matter of course that he should

labor at the Sanscrit. It is known that he once made, by request, to a Society [the Connecticut Academy of Arts] an elaborate report on the grammar of the Basque; but it is not known that he also examined many other languages which he did not read." *

There was not, indeed, a language or a dialect (save the Turkish) of modern Europe with which he ^{A universal scholar.} was unacquainted; and in the modern languages of India he had made extensive studies.

While engaged in these all-absorbing pursuits, the passion for poetry coined out of his own teeming ^{Loses his ambition in} imagination was repressed. His practical oc- ^{poetry.} cupations where chilling to poetic enthusiasm, and his pen had become almost unused to numbers. A disappointed career had eaten in upon the genial, creative activity of his mind. Yet there were those who longed to see Percival claiming his station as one of the first American poets. In the New York Courier, ^{Summons.} some time before, there had appeared the following:—

“LINES ADDRESSED TO PERCIVAL THE POET.

“Leave thy dull corner and thy fagot-fire,
A fellow-poet calls thee to aspire:
Renounce thy narrow hearth and chamber small,
And mount aloft to the amaze of all.
Like a bright eagle, stretch thy flight in air,
And wake thy country's feelings from despair;
Shake off thy sorrow and replume thy wing,
And only sing as thou wert wont to sing.
“BOSTONIENSIS.”

* Poems, Vol. I. pp. xxxvi. - xxxviii.

To this he replied in the Boston Literary Gazette
 His reply. in a "Sonnet, — To C. B. of the New York
 Courier."

"Call once again upon the thrice-crowned bard,
 Now that *thy* harp is taken from the tree;
 And dead to pride, his feelings trebly hard,
 If not aroused by such a call from thee;
 For who would lie in dull, oblivious sleep,
 Betray to gold the Muse's pen divine,
 When he might make the world to laugh or weep,
 By dal'ying fondly with the sisters nine?
 But wake thee, wake thee, child of genius, wake!
 Nor longer dream thy native land so poor!
 Let recreant NEALE his country's fame forsake,
His pen can ne'er enlighten or obscure,
 While CLIO * sings, or HILLHOUSE deigns to write,
 Or BRYANT, more sublime, walks forth in beauty's light.

"P."

Early in the present year the following came out in
 1831. the New England Weekly Review, the poet
 Whittier's paper, when Whittier was hardly
 yet known as a poet. It was written by the late W.
 B. O. Peabody, and delicately refers to the
 Sonnet by Dr. Peabody. leading characteristics of Percival's poetry.

"SONNET TO PERCIVAL.

"Son of the Muses! hast thou thrown thy lyre,
 Like a forgotten gift, upon the deep
 Of dark oblivion? — Shall its echoes sweep
 On every wind no more? — no more inspire
 A flame in every breast? — a soul of fire!
 It was a soother once of sorrow's thorn,
 And shall the midday of thy manlier years
 Belie the promise of Life's early morn?"

* Percival.

Thy joy was then where Fame's proud altar rears,
Thy home was in thy own sweet *Clio's* bowers,
Thine was the Muse's mount, the Muse's spring,
The garland, woven of the wild-wood flowers,
The thrilling song, which none but thee might sing;
These all were doubly thine, — and wilt thou fling
Such gifts on care's dull shrine? — No! wake once more,
And eagle-like, to thine own eyrie soar!

"ALP."

Perhaps it was this poetic summons, together with his own urgent want of means, which led him to think of a new edition of his poems. In the autumn of the present year he sent this prospectus very generally to his friends in all parts of the country, — to Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, New York, Boston, and many other places:—

The subscriber proposes to publish, by subscription, an edition of his poems, including a selection from those already published, and also several unpublished pieces; to be comprised in two volumes 12mo of three hundred and fifty pages each, in the style of Pickering's Aldine Edition of the British Poets, at one dollar per volume.

It is requested that the papers be returned to the subscriber at New Haven by the 1st of April, 1832.

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

It met with a response, but not so hearty or encouraging as he had anticipated, and he therefore gave it up. It was the last attempt, during his lifetime, at a collective or select edition.

In the letters which are now in order, the stories of his poverty and his studies are closely blended. They are

addressed to Professor Ticknor, to whom, in matters
Letter to pertaining to general literature, he felt more free
Professor to express his opinions than to any one else ;
Ticknor. and of him it may be justly said, that, like Dr. Hayward,
 he gave Percival that mental encouragement which was
 precious to him beyond expression. He gave also his
 sympathy and his ready help.

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

NEW HAVEN, May 16, 1832.

DEAR SIR, —

A few weeks since I received a subscription paper with
 four names, including yours, the only one I have received
 from Boston. This attempt at an edition has entirely
 failed. It was an experiment which I do not regret to
 have tried, but which I now quite as little regret has
 failed. I had much rather it should have failed en-
Gives up tirely as it has, than have partially succeeded.
poetry. Henceforth the publication of poetry will be a
 matter of no concern with me.

I have sent you for some weeks past papers from one
His metrical of the offices in New Haven, in which are spe-
translations. cimens of metrical translation. My object in
 publishing these pieces was, by giving rhythmical ver-
 sions as nearly literal as possible, to present something
 entirely different from the current poetry (*verse*) of the
 day. I did not expect that they would excite any atten-
 tion. Some few, however, may perceive their purport.
 I would just call your attention to the strong Saxonism
 and Normanism, if I may so say, of these pieces. Far
 the greater part of the words are of Saxon origin, and

most of the remainder (nearly all), of the oldest Norman-English (Chaucerian). In one piece of forty-five lines (the first of Russian popular poetry), there are only two words not of Saxon origin, and those of the oldest English. This result was entirely unpremeditated. It was not observed till the pieces were printed.

With regard to literary employment, I am in the same situation as when I wrote to you two years ago on the subject. I have been employed the better part of the time for some years past on literary labors, which have detached me from other pursuits, and in fact have made a continuance of such employment a matter of the most essential importance to me. I cannot but think I am entitled to such employment, and that on liberal terms. Pleads for employment. I am not willing to believe myself, as yet, doomed solely in that respect to profitless and thankless drudgery. It is my choice to continue in such employments. I think I may be most usefully employed in that way; nor am I conscious that I have done anything to forfeit my claims to it. Although my former applications to you have been unavailing, yet my confidence in your good wishes is such, that I again present the subject to your attention.

Have you read *Der Arme Heinrich*? Would the story be offensive to English and American An old German poem. tastes as it now is? There seem to me fine elements of poetry in its composition, narrated, it is true, with the utmost simplicity, but on the whole picturesque and pathetic. The *miselsucht* of Heinrich, the strange superstition that he could be healed only by *der megede blüt*, and the scene in the *meister* at Salerno [e], would doubtless be offensive; but the strong fidelity of *der meiger und der meigerin sin* [wiss], the heroic and de-

voted attachment of *in dohter die maget*, to whom Heinrich owed *ere unde liss*, and his own grateful affection for his *trut*, are in my view choice materials for a tale of simple feeling. I am particularly pleased by the meeting of the farmer and his wife on the return of their daughter and Heinrich from Salerno, when they found her alive and well, and Heinrich *reine und wot gesunt, also vor zwenzig jaren*. I here give it, with a nearly literal version, in a loose rhythm not unlike the original.

dem meiger und sinen wibe,
den mag men wol gelöben,
man welle sie danne rehtes röben
duz sie do heime nicht beliben
sie ist jemer ungeschriben,
die fröide, die sie hatten,
wan sie got hette beraten
mit lieber ögenwerdc,
die gabent in do biede
ir tohter und ir herre
es en-wart nie fröide merre
dan in biden was geschehen,
do sie hatten gesehen,
daz sie gesunt waren
sie en-wusten, wie sie gebaren:
ir grüs war spehe undersnitten
mit vil selzehen sitten;
ir herze-liebe wart also gros,
daz [in] das lachen begos
der regen von den ögen:
die rede ist ane lögen,
sie kusten irre dohter munt
ettewas me dan dri stunt.

Of the farmer and his wife
We may well believe,
Else we should rob them of right,
That they did n't stay at home.
It has never been described,
The joy that they had,
When God had them provided
With the pleasant sight to their
eyes,
Both their daughter and their lord.
There was never more joy
Than both befell,
When they had seen
That they were well.
They knew not what they did:
Their greeting was mixed
In a very strange way:
Their heart's love was so great,
That in laughing there poured
Rain from their eyes:
We may say without a lie
That they kissed their daughter's
mouth
Something more than three times.

I observe in this old poem the now obsolete *en* used thus: *en-wart nie*, was never; *en-wusten*, knew not; *en-schühet weder*, shuns neither; *en-gelonbeten niemans*,

believed no man's; *nicht en-sneit*, cut not. The last like the French *ne—pas*, and the Low Dutch *neit en*-, in the old States' Bible. The first like *ne—jamais*. The second simple. The fourth double.

A line from you would be very agreeable.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

NEW HAVEN, June 4, 1832.

DEAR SIR,—

I received on Saturday yours of the 30th ultimo with no little satisfaction. I am sorry to say, however, that what you have written in relation to literary employment, although I cannot doubt your readiness to assist me, still leaves me in equal uncertainty. The method * Cannot find employment. you have proposed to me, I have repeatedly tried with different booksellers during the last three years, but without success. I can have no further confidence in any efforts I may myself make in that way. It is easy for me to find pursuits in which I should like to be engaged, and also such as I should feel myself competent to, and in which I should not hesitate to engage if sufficiently profitable; but the difficulty is, to form such an arrangement with a suitable publisher as will secure to me a liberal compensation. I have been necessarily confined for some years, as I before observed to you, to literary pursuits. Habit and the difficulty of changing employments have rendered a continuance of them almost necessary; otherwise I should be strongly tempted, from my past experience, to seek some better employment. I

* That of submitting plans to publishers.

have, however, borne much with the hope that those who can judge of my deserts, and who possess an influence which may be advantageously used in forwarding my interests, would ultimately see that justice is done me. I am not in a situation to strike out an extensive plan, and devote the necessary time and labor to it at my own risk. What I now want is an engagement not too long, and for which I should be liberally compensated; one on which I could calculate. I am very desirous to form it with a regular and respectable bookseller, one who deals fairly and openly, not in nooks and corners. I have Unfortunate with the Geography. been very unfortunate in my connection with the Geography. The course it has taken has thrown me seriously into the background. For the last two years my income has been only sixty-five dollars a year, and that from the Geography. For this I have employed several months each year of the closest application, at a compensation of only about fifteen dollars a month; all the time subject to the unmannerly duns and cavils of the publisher. Several of the numbers were published without submitting the proofs to my revision, and this after I had expressly announced in an advertisement my intention of thoroughly correcting the translation. Having found an opportunity of examining these numbers (the works not sent to me as published, though needed), and finding them full of errors, I procured from the publisher an engagement to distribute a table of errata for these numbers among his subscribers, as soon as I could prepare it. I completed it, and saw it printed in May, 1830. In May, 1831, I found that it had not been distributed. I then wrote to the publisher, requiring its distribution. He said it was then his intention to retain it till the end of the work; but on my again pressing it, he agreed again

to distribute it without delay. Less than three months ago he sent me a copy of it for revision, stating that he was then preparing it for distribution. From what I have since observed, I have reason to think that he has not yet distributed it. I have written to him on the subject, and received an evasive answer. I do not myself believe that he has distributed it, or that he intends to. By the course which he has taken, he has, in my view, not only violated his word, but done a serious injury to my reputation for accuracy. It is my wish to avoid all such disagreeable connections in future. I might specify the plans, if necessary, which I have already submitted to booksellers. One of them which I submitted to Carter and Hendee last spring, without success, I detailed to you at the time (an edition of Lempriere's Biographical Dictionary). I had, however, much rather leave the choice of the work to the booksellers, or to a friend who is better situated than I am to judge what work, suitable to my talents and attainments, would be most likely to succeed with the public. I would only say, that I wish such engagements to be with a regular publisher, not too long, and with a compensation at least so liberal as not to impose upon me a drudgery. I cannot any longer bear that. Such an engagement, from the unfavorable situation in which I have been placed for the last three years, is of much importance to me. I still rely upon your readiness to assist me with your influence in procuring me such employment, and shall wait with no little confidence that my expectations will not be disappointed.

When I said that I did not regret that my subscription had failed, I added that at least I preferred that it should fail entirely as it had than that it should partially have

succeeded. I should, however, have been highly gratified had my proposition been fully met. I should have considered such a result equally honorable to both parties; to me, for having confided, to my friends and the public, for having answered my confidence. But since the affair has resulted as it has, I do not wish to meddle any further with the publication of poetry. My feelings revolt against it.

I am much gratified to find you so well pleased with
 Mr. H. Mr. Augur.* I hope he will meet amply and
 Augur. richly in his walk of art the encouragement
 which has been denied to me in mine.

In my remarks on *Arme Heinrich*, I did not intend
 The old Ger- to convey the impression that I designed to
 man poem
 again and a translate it. I had been very much struck with
 study in
 Philology. the persons of it, and I wished to convey my
 impression to the only one I knew in this country with
 whom I could communicate on the subject. I am per-
 suaded, indeed, that the main pivot of the poem, Hein-
 rich's leprosy, would shock the fastidiousness of present
 taste. Still I think the poem is rich in all the elements of
 a simple pathetic story. It would seem that at those early
 periods the leprosy was a frequent subject of poetic inter-
 est; but it is now very different (*nous avons change tout*
[tout] cela). See the Appendix to the Grimms' edi-
 tion (the one I have used) III., *über den aussatz*, and par-
 ticularly the old Dutch ballad at the end. You ask if
Ettewas me dan dri stunt should not be rendered three
 hours rather than three times, as I rendered it. I gave
 my rendering from reflection. I did not doubt that *stunt*
 was the present German *stunde* (hour). Grimm, how-
 ever, here renders *dri stunt* by *dreimal*. Three hours I

* Mr. Horatio Augur, the untaught sculptor.

thought too long a salutation even for such a meaning, and yet something *ettewas* more than three hours seemed less quaint than something more than three times. I have, however, observed similar phraseology with the last among our country people, to express an uncertain but not very great repetition. Grimm observes in a note that *ettewas* is only intensive (*stärkand*) of me, — in the Vat. manuscript *micheel me* (much more). I find it stated in Jahn's Biblical Archæology, p. 189, in describing the extravagance of Oriental salutation, that the Orientals sometimes repeated the act of salutation not less than ten times. If ten times was extravagant in the impassioned Orientals, three, or something more than three, might be considered sufficiently so among the soberer Germans. I have noted the different uses of *stunt* in this poem; and I think when it may bear the meaning of hour, it rather signifies *quando* than *quamdiu*. Lines 318, 319, *do fluch sie zü allen strunden*, — *zü ime*; yet she flew at all times (hours) to him. Line 555, *ander selben stunt*; at that very time. Lines 586, 587, *unde wursten für dien stunt*, — *der rede jemer me lut*; and now (for this time) if you ever again speak of it. Lines 946–956, *dir wer der laut-lute spot*, — *swar ich für disce stunde*, — *mich arzenien underwünde*, — *unde mich doch nüt verviange*, — *wan als es doch ergienge*; the people would laugh at me, should I now (for this time) try medicines, and with no better success than before? Lines 1182, 1183, *hin führt er sie ze stunt*, — *in sin heinlich gemach*; he led her then (at that very time) into his secret chamber. Lines 1371, 1372, *und mahte in do ze stunt-reine und wol gesunt*; and made him at that moment clean and well. Line 1478, *dar ich vor kurzer stunt*; that I a short time (a little while) ago. These, if I mistake not, are the only instances in which the

word is used in the poem, and it seems to me they confirm the Grimms' rendering, which I followed. In reading this poem I have had to guess my way, as I had no old German glossary. The Grimms' version is not very literal, and it seems to me in many instances not to convey the peculiar beauty of the original. I have judged for myself from my knowledge of German and other Teutonic dialects.

The double negative *en*—*neat*, rather, triple *gien*—*en niet*, is once used in the old Dutch ballad. St. 7, *habber geen kompen ofte schoen,—en in zaven jaar niet gedragen*; *I have no stockings or shoes not in seven years not worn*, i. e. *I have not worn stockings or shoes for seven years*. The Grimms, in their version, have a double negative, *kain* and *nichts*,—*I have not worn no stockings and no shoes*; exactly like our vulgar usage,—*there did n't nobody do it*. This subject of a double negative I have examined somewhat, and think it would furnish materials for a curious dissertation. Another, too: why do the French omit the *n* in Frenchifying German and Dutch names ending in *en*, as Hemingen; French, Hemingue? and why is the infinitive termination *e* or *a* in the Scandinavian language, while it is *en* or *an* in all the cultivated Teutonic languages from Mæso-Gothic to German? This I think I have [shown] by recurrence to popular dialects and common pronunciation. Another curious subject is the degradation of words in some languages, while they retain in other cognate languages their original elevated meanings. This is particularly the case in the English as compared with its kindred languages, German, Dutch, etc. Thus wagon (*wagen*), stool (*stuhl*), hide (*haut*), etc. Excuse my prosing.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

NEW HAVEN, July 6, 1832.

DEAR SIR, —

I received yours of the 29th ultimo some days since with great satisfaction. Although it did not present me with any immediate prospect, yet I consider it as a full assurance of your good wishes to me, and it is now with renewed confidence that I venture on this reply. I have, however, hesitated awhile in answering you, not from any want of confidence in you, but rather in myself. In truth, I feel myself in a very critical position; and being so placed, I have distrusted my own feelings in any attempt at further correspondence with you, lest they might betray me into some expression which might do me an injury. I wish to express myself plainly, and I trust you will make due allowances for any remark which under different circumstances might seem improper. Four or five years ago, when engaged on the Dictionary, and when I had the first five volumes of the Geography (English edition) on hand to prepare as fast as I could, I succeeded, by the severest and most self-denying application, in raising my income for about two years to something approaching the income of such literary men in this country as are sustained in their pursuits. Unlike most such, I did not increase my expenses at all, but confined them to what was barely necessary. Calculating on a continuance of similarly steady and equally profitable employment, I invested the surplus of my income in such a way as I thought best suited to my literary pursuits, but so that I do not now wish to disturb it, nor can I without a ruinous sacrifice. But instead of a regular continuance

Feels himself in a very critical condition.

of employment, there has been an entire falling off. For more than three years past my income has been unequal to my moderate expenses; for the last two years, as I have already stated, only sixty five dollars per annum. The consequence is, that now, unless I can secure to myself a regular and liberally compensated employment, I cannot sustain myself; with such employment, which I cannot think but that I have amply deserved, by my talents, my attainments, and the fidelity, accuracy, and industry with which I have accomplished what I have undertaken, — with such employment my way will be smooth before me. Under such circumstances, I feel myself compelled to plead for employment, steady employment, and with a compensation suited to me, such as is fit for a literary man who deserves encouragement. I have no wish for anything more. Only give me light and room (*ποίησον δ' αἶθρην*), and I am sure I can exert myself still with as much effort and diligence as any, and I doubt not with sufficient effect. But if employment and encouragement should be withheld from me, as it has been for the last three years, the consequence is apparently inevitable. I wish only for a fair and honorable opportunity to extricate myself. The employments mentioned in your letter would be agreeable to me, if sufficiently compensated. I should not engage in them as a matter of ambition, but *il faut vivre*, first of all, I must secure a proper income by my own exertions. If I cannot do that, ambitious pursuits are ridiculous.

There is one employment, however, which I would wish to place above interest or ambition, which I would choose to regard as holy, — poetry. True poetry should be a holy thing, like true philosophy and true religion, — the product only of our

His income
sixty-five
dollars a
year, and he
pleads for the
employment
of a literary
man.

His opinion
of the poet-
ical call-
ing.

highest intellectual and moral nature (*ein reines vernünftiges gefühl*). I have expressed this figuratively in a formula, which I may give as my *Credo*, — “Philosophy, Religion, and Poetry sit enthroned as a spiritual Triunity in the shrine of our highest nature. The perfect vision of all-embracing truth, the vital feeling of all-blessing good, and the living conception of all-gracing beauty, they form united the Divinity of Pure Reason.” With such feelings I can no longer look to my poetry as a source of emolument. I cannot consent to use it for such a purpose. I can only regard it as the vestal fire in my *adytum*. I must meet the world with weapons of a more earthly temper.

When I thus express my wish and anxiety to engage in some profitable employment, although in itself purely laborious, I do not acknowledge any distrust of my poetical talents, any defeat or failure in that way, any lower feeling for poetry; on the contrary, my poetical feelings are higher, my confidence in such ability is raised; but I will not again come before the public in that character. It would be idle to attempt it.

I observed to you before, that I had presented different plans to booksellers within the last three years, but without success. I could detail these plans and others, if desired. Had I, like certain individuals I could name, who I think are my inferiors in capacity, a steady well-paid employment, with sufficient leisure, I could keep myself busily employed for a long life in executing the literary and scientific plans which are more distinctly in my mind; but placed as I now am, without income and without prospects, to attempt any one of them spontaneously would be like shooting in the dark, *a randa a randa*, when in all probability the shaft would fall *a mezza volgia*. As I am now situated, some

Does not
distrust his
poetical
talents.

Presents
plans to
booksellers
without
success.

employment on which I can calculate is a matter of first, indispensable necessity. With that secured to me, I could go on with confidence, and I would hope to ascend into a brighter region. I still have undiminished, rather I have now increased confidence in your friendly regard, and I doubt not you will readily improve any opportunity to put me in the way of employing myself to advantage. I should like much to see you personally and discuss my concerns more directly than I can in a letter, but I regret to say my circumstances do not permit me. If anything should offer to you, or if you could give me any suggestions of any importance to me, a line from you would be peculiarly gratifying. It would be one of the very few rays which now visit me.

Dependence upon Professor Ticknor's help to literary work his last resort. I have written this with full confidence that you will interpret all kindly and favorably. I have spoken of myself with a freedom that I feel can only be justified by my peculiar circumstances. I find myself driven to an extremity in which I must vindicate my own claims or succumb. Self-defence is the first law and the last effort of nature. I must therefore bespeak your indulgence in reading this letter. I can truly say I know of no other one to whom I would so have confided myself.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

It is pleasant to observe this generous confidence placed by one literary man in the friendly good-will of the other; and yet pleasanter to know that Professor Ticknor was equal to the expectations of his friend and aided him in every possible way. Percival was now anxious to the last degree as to his future. The following note came through the post-office a few days after the preceding letter:—

BOSTON, July 18, 1832.

DEAR SIR, —

I am at present here, and should like an opportunity of seeing you on the subjects I have written about of late. Whether any immediate results might arise from any discussion of these subjects or not, I cannot but think it of great importance to me to have an opportunity of a free conversation with you.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE TICKNOR, ESQ.

An attempt was made to sell an edition of the poems to a Boston bookseller. Through Dr. Hayward, he offered it on the following terms : —

“I will assent to an edition of my poems of two thousand copies, retail price not to exceed two dollars per copy, preparation to be left with me, for five hundred dollars, payable on preparation of the copy, and ten copies on publication. You will much oblige me by a speedy answer favorable or unfavorable.”

Attempt to
sell an edi-
tion of his
poems.

This was thought to be too much by the publisher, and Percival resented some necessary inquiries, so that nothing came of it. Dr. Hayward made to him, in regard to this affair, a very just remark : “I believe much of your ill success with booksellers is owing to the manner in which you treat them.” He told his friend very plainly and frankly his situation at this time. The letters are similar in their statements to those addressed to Professor Ticknor.

Its failure
and the
cause.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, October 18, 1832.

. . . . I cannot, however, any longer forbear stating ex-
 plicitly certain facts relating to the Geography
 and their effect on my circumstances. Six years
 since I entered into my engagement to edit the work.
 When in Boston, in August, I had prepared eight vol-
 umes, for which I had received \$1,040,—less than \$200
 per annum. For the four years previous, I had received
 only \$390,—less than \$100 per annum. For the two
 years previous only \$130,—but \$65 per annum. I was
 paid for all the time employed on Webster's Dictionary
 at the rate of \$1,000 per annum. So inadequate has
 been the compensation for the time employed on the
 Geography that I have spent on it many months of close
 application for less than \$15 per month (not including
 reading proofs of the same). I have not done this cer-
 tainly for the compensation received, but from a determi-
 nation to fulfil my engagement strictly, and from a confi-
 dent expectation that my friends in Boston would use their
 influence to procure me such employment as would ulti-
 mately make good to me the time lost in so doing. More
 than two years since I stated these circumstances to some
 of my friends in Boston, and requested them to use their
 influence in procuring me such employment. I have also
 made personal application myself to booksellers
 in Boston; but all without any result. I must
 say that my expectations have been wholly disappointed,
 nor has this been by any means without embarrassment
 to me. I write this unwillingly; for in a matter like this,
 I dislike above all things to urge what I fully believe a

His pecuni-
ary condi-
tion.

All his efforts
unsuccessful.

just claim, when it is not readily granted ; but it is time for me either to find what I have expected or to abandon all reliance on it, and look in other directions. . . .

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, November 3, 1832.

I wrote you last month, stating my circumstances. In consequence of those circumstances, suspense is now to me in the last degree painful. You will therefore very much oblige me by stating to me distinctly your opinion whether, in the way of *literary employment*, I can in the present conjuncture expect anything from Boston. Something I must find to do, as I am unwilling to throw away all expectations from Boston without an express declaration that I may rely on. I therefore make to you this request. . . .

P. S. — I have returned a book I borrowed of Mr. A. H. Everett (Du Pape), directed to the care of Gray and Bowen, and forwarded in a package by Mr. Howe, bookseller. You will oblige me by mentioning this to him when you meet him.

TO GEORGE HAYWARD.

NEW HAVEN, November 18, 1832.

. . . . In truth, in consequence of the time and opportunity lost in fulfilling my engagements with the Geography, and the disappointment of all my expectations in Boston, I am in a more difficult and embarrassing situation than I have ever

His pecuniary condition more embarrassing than ever before.

been in my life, and this with property that ought to be worth to me at least twenty-five hundred dollars (property that I would not on any account dispose of, and which I could not without a ruinous sacrifice), and with engagements (including the remains of the Geography) to the amount of thirteen hundred dollars. But I am entirely without available funds. How I can extricate myself, I do not well know; but I will not do it by any voluntary sacrifice of essential interests. I have thus made a plain statement of my situation to you.

P. S. — With regard to my residence in Boston or vicinity, I will simply say, that, if I were to consult my wishes merely, I should not remove, but I would assent if it could really secure to me steady and profitable employment.

The poet had now fairly entered upon the desperate
A desperate struggle with poverty. struggle with poverty from which he was not free till near the close of his life. The interest in literary pursuits was not yet general enough to authorize the publication of such works as gave full scope for the use of Percival's vast and accurate knowledge; and our publishers, finding a ready sale for cheap reprints of English publications, did almost nothing to encourage the talents of our own authors. His efforts to obtain literary employment had all signally failed; he could not sell an edition of his poems, and there was no use in further exertion. Yet, disheartening as were his prospects, he did not give up. He does not give up. "He found shelter among books which insult not, and studies that ask no questions of [one's] finances." He reduced his expenses to the lowest sum, boarding himself in his own

rooms, and gave himself unreservedly to those favorite pursuits which had now for some years been held in abeyance. He was engaged chiefly in ^{Engages anew in favorite studies.}

studies pertaining to the languages, making elaborate researches in philology, and composing as a pastime in the languages with which he was most familiar, as the German, Italian, and French; and while his own narrow circumstances caused him necessarily to withdraw from intercourse with his fellow-men to the still and secluded life of the scholar, yet his very interest in these studies sometimes led him out into society. A member of the Class of 1833, at Yale, remembers distinctly the *viva voce* translations from Goethe and Schiller which he was induced to give before his classmates; and there were many who, ^{*Viva voce* translations from Goethe and Schiller.} meeting him mousing in the alcoves of the college library, found him singularly communicative and his conversation unexpectedly rich and free. If one came upon him thus accidentally, it seemed to please him; he was ready to talk; and many a student, meeting him in these chance ways, carried away perhaps the most correct impression of the apparently wayward genius who dwelt apart from men.

He was not, however, at this time without proposals from two or three publishers, which he seriously ^{Proposals from publishers.} entertained. One was from Fessenden and Company of Brattleboro, Vermont, requesting him to edit a complete American edition of the British Poets. He consented, and had begun to prepare for it, when, early in 1834, they wrote him that "the publication of the poets and all the steps regarding it have been suspended in consequence of the times. All business is at a stand." He also became a regular contributor to the Knicker-

bocker Magazine, which then, under its young editors, Clark and Edson, commanded the best pens in our country, and did more than any other periodical to encourage many of our present best native writers. His communications were in both prose and verse, and contributed largely toward his slender income.

Another engagement, which promised greater results than anything else, was a History of the United States of America, as a continuation of Botta's History of the War of Independence, commencing at the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783, and embracing the intermediate time to the end of Monroe's administration in the year 1825. He contracted to engage upon this in June, 1833, and at once began to collect his materials. He was to have five hundred dollars advanced to him each year, until its completion, and then was to receive ten per cent of the profits accruing from the work, after "the amount of such commission had been first applied to the repayment, with interest, of the money advanced" to him by the publisher, Mr. Nathan Whiting, a bookseller in New Haven. He actually be-

The work
begun.

gan the composition of the work; and the manuscript is still among his papers, a mere fragment. He had some intention also of preparing a Synopsis of General Knowledge, for which, indeed, his encyclopedic range of information excellently prepared him; but it was only one of those plans which flitted brilliantly across his mind, "the baseless fabric of a vision."

A letter to Professor Ticknor at this time has a special value, as showing the direction of his studies, and as containing his matured opinion on several literary subjects. It was preceded by a manuscript book of German poetry which he sent

The manu-
script book
of German
poetry.

for his opinion of its merits, and for the opinion of some educated German as to his success with the idioms of a foreign language. Professor Ticknor sent it to his friend Dr. Follen, then a professor in Harvard University, who returned it with a brief criticism which greatly pleased the author

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

CAMBRIDGE, January 14, 1834.

DEAR SIR, —

I have read with much interest, pleasure, and wonder the piece of German poetry which you enclosed ^{Dr. Follen's} in the letter I received from you yesterday. ^{opinion of it.} This attempt of one who has learned German only from books at expressing, in that language, his own individual conceptions, evidently shows that he has entered into the spirit of those works, and that the foreign idiom did not prevent him from finding in them an expression of his own feelings. There is a number of mistakes against the grammar and the idiom, which I will point out to you whenever you can let me have the poem for a longer time ; but many lines and some entire stanzas are faultless. Such as these : —

“ Wie sterbte der Verstand zum wahren,” etc. ;

“ Nunscheint der Blitz,” etc. ;

“ So gehen wir durch dieses Leben,” etc.

It was but this afternoon that I found time to read the poem over with some care ; and now I have to send it off with this very imperfect criticism, that it may reach you

this evening according to your appointment. But I hope you will let me have it once more at some other time.

Your friend and servant,

C. FOLLEN.

Encouraged by this favorable opinion, he sent on his Sends on more verses. German verses to Professor Ticknor for further examination. He again forwarded them to Dr. Follen, who returned them back with the following note: —

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

CAMBRIDGE, April 4, 1834.

DEAR SIR, —

I have read with great interest and pleasure the poetry which you were so kind as to send me; but my many engagements have prevented me from making any written remarks. But I will endeavor to see Dr. Percival while he is in Boston; and as I know that there is nothing a lover likes so well as to hear a disinterested friend talk about the object of his devotion, I will converse with him solely on German poetry.

Your friend and servant,

C. FOLLEN.

The letter already referred to speedily followed his manuscript: —

TO GEORGE TICKNOR.

NEW HAVEN, February 17, 1834.

DEAR SIR, —

I sent you two or three weeks since a package of German verses, with a few specimens of French and Italian.

I did not, in the accompanying note, request you to send me your opinion of them; still I did not doubt that you would do so when you had leisure to examine them, or as before to refer the German to Dr. Follen. I ^{His verses.} should be gratified by such an opinion, however unfavorable it might be. I do not profess nor aim to write in any other language than my own. These were mere *jeux de mots*, not in the common meaning of that phrase, but in one perhaps allowable. Having never studied the composition of any foreign language, nor even practised on a single theme, not even in Greek or Latin, (for composition in those languages never was set me by my teachers,

If such I might have had, who such had none),

and I cannot pretend to write with accuracy in such languages, nor shall I feel surprised or disappointed if the specimens I sent you abound in errors of grammar and idiom. What I intended was to assume the air ^{His idea in writing them.} and spirit of the literature I attempted to imitate; and, indeed, I flatter myself that in that I have not entirely failed. To arrange my thoughts and feelings as a German or Italian poet, to assume their tone and manner, and to follow their expression, was my main design; and if I have failed in that, I shall truly think my labor lost. Whatever capacity I may have to write verse in the languages I have attempted has been gained unconsciously, not by purpose or effort. It is only the spontaneous result of my reading in the poetry of those languages, and of the interest excited in me by such reading. It has come to me simply as a child acquires his vernacular; not, however, by the ear, but by the eye. Many things I have put down in these specimens, because

they were hovering undefinedly in my memory, not because I could justify them by grammar or dictionary; and a few things I did alter in obedience to such guides, where I have since found my first copy justified by my reading. I will again repeat that I should be gratified by your and Dr. Follen's opinion, and hope you will not delay communicating it to me, though I say unhesitatingly that success in such a line is neither desired nor expected by me.

I might at first be pleased by a difficulty overcome; but excellence in one's native literature ought to fill the whole compass of one's ambition and effort. I will take
 The study of
 language. this opportunity to observe that I do not think it
 any advantage to one, but quite the contrary, to cultivate the composition of any language but the one in which he means to distinguish himself as a writer, i. e. his vernacular. The perfect command of his own language is enough for any author. If he attempts another, he will always want the grace and ease of a native, and will be in no little danger of impairing the purity of his own. The mastery of a language is as exclusive in its requirements as pure and undefiled religion. "You cannot serve both God and mammon," — you cannot write both English and German, not at least with that perfect mastery of both which makes a Shakespeare or a Goethe. I have often wondered why the ancients have conveyed to us so little particular information on other languages than their own. They must have learned other languages, as necessary for communication with the nations they conquered or traded with. History tells us of the wonderful acquirements and capacity of Mithridates (twenty-two languages spoken), Cleopatra, and Themistocles (the Persian learned in a few days), and yet we have from them none of that particular knowledge of for-

eign languages which forms so large a portion of modern literature. We might say the organ of language has increased with us, or rather has become lobulate [diffused], turning our minds towards many, whereas theirs were concentrated on one. The truth is, with them the cultivation and perfection of their own language was everything, the acquisition of other languages of importance only as far as necessary and convenient. Other languages were barbarous and contemned,—theirs was divine and worthy of all their attention. Hence the perfection of their writers; and that, too, in languages of vastly more artificial and complex structure than ours. I would thus speak and write (I say this merely as an author) only my own mother tongue. No matter how many languages are learned analytically (the more the better), but let them all be studied with reference to the mother tongue (*die heilige Muttersprache*), let the main purpose be to develop and enrich that. Goethe said he had learned one art, *Deutsch Zur schreiben*, and as a literary artist that was enough. So for me, I would say, it is enough to write English; and yet, for convenience with himself or his friends, an author may sometimes use another language to express, though imperfectly, what, from the foreign character of the subject, he would express still more inefficiently in his mother tongue. If one, as a philosopher or *savant*, has studied German philosophy, and has entered into its spirit, he may find it quite easy to express his thoughts and feelings; for I imagine that is as much a *Gefühl*-system as a mere matter of intellect; and if one looks at it only with a dry *verständlich* eye, and has not yet felt himself overshadowed by the solemn majesty of the *Vernunft* (I speak reverently), he will find himself in the position of a certain sneerer not far from you turn-

ing his arrows on himself, — he may find it easy to express his thoughts and feelings in his bad German, when it would be nearly impossible to put them down in English. We want the words, or the uses of words, necessary. So too with my *Epigrammes Poirennnes*. I might do them better with bad French than I could possibly with English. But such things should be *inter nos*.

I said above, no matter how many languages one learns analytically (the more the better). In my view, the proper analytical study of other languages is one of the best means of giving copiousness and richness to one's own. Let care be taken to put everything in genuine English, which will come the natural way, from good conversation and reading, and, as the only vehicle of thought, will, like a snowball, be constantly rolling itself up by inflection, — let the exact nicest shades of meaning be gathered from analysis, and let these shades be embodied in our own idioms, — and one will come out from such a reading of Homer, for instance, with a world of English conquered. So I practised in reading Homer; and if I have truly possessed any freedom and copiousness of diction, as has been allowed me, I believe I am as much indebted for it to such a mode of studying language as to any other cause.

I have practised classifying translation, according to its different degrees of clearness and freedom: Translation classified. 1. Not merely *verbum verbo*, but *pars parti*, analyzing the words, and giving in good old Saxon English — for most of our most radical words are such — the separate meaning of each element of the word, e. g. ἀδιάλειπτος, — unintermittent, continual, not between leaving, — not leaving off or ceasing in any point of time between (that before and that behind it), i. e. any interesting point, any

moment in the progress of time; 2. *Verbum verbo* in the order of the original; 3. Do. in what we would call inverted order or poetical diction; 4. Do. in plain, direct English order; 5. All foreign idioms converted into English as closely as possible; 6. Freely, but without embellishment or paraphrase; 7. Such embellishment added as is naturally connected with or suggested by the letter of the original; 8. Full paraphrase, and doubtless many other modifications. I have frequently practised such variety of rendering in peculiarly striking passages, and have been surprised at the multitude of expressions that would throng into my mind during such an exercise. All this, though it may render you master of the sense of the original, and rich in the uses of your own language, does not aid you at all, I think, in the composition of the language so studied, but rather the reverse. You look at it in its separated elements, not in its combinations and adjustments.

My object in studying languages* has been mainly twofold: to understand them analytically, so as to catch the precise shades of meaning, particularly in all works of genius (*vernünstige Werke*), and to learn their philological (etymological) relations and affinities. This last, as I observed to you, was what first interested me especially in the study of languages, and I have never lost that interest. The other point has rendered all poetical, and, I might say, oratorical and philosophical translations comparatively indifferent to me. Some such translations may be splendid works in themselves, — not, however, as translations, but original. Such may be said of Pope's Homer and Sotheby's Oberon; but Pope's Homer, "though rich, spirited, and elegant," is not the

* Appendix G.

strong, majestic, simple, *eindringenel* original; nor is the polished, mellifluous, but uniform English Oberon the free, flexible, and various German original,—the tone and movement is wholly different. Had there been no Ariosto, I would have called the Oberon the prototype of Don Juan.

I will here make a few remarks on a subject that was
States the
languages he
has read. started in conversation when I was with you last. You asked me what languages I had read. I first repeated the languages in which I had read, but remarked that I had done so in connection with my study of German philology; I did not profess to read them readily. I then said that I read the Roman and Germanic languages with some ease, but particularly so Italian, French, and German. Such is the fact; and to avoid misstatements, I will now say that, besides Greek and Latin, I have studied most particularly Italian, French, and German; in the next class, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish, and that comparatively in the order here given. I have been over the grammars of many other languages, and have read and translated them more or less analytically. I have studied the Mithridates, and for several years have read what I have met on the subject of the affinities of languages with interest. To some extent I have pursued comparative etymology. All this I have done, I may say truly, from the love of the pursuit, not for public display. I am conscious that I must look to pursuits of a very different character for such compensation as every one needs. I do not embrace in my view *belles-lettres* (poetry); that I know is ground that profit forbids me to tread on. *Mais n'importe.* Do, and one will be occupied, and therefore not unhappy. . . .

You will oblige me by reporting on my German and other verses, and on this letter if you choose.

Yours truly,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE TICKNOR.

In the omitted portion of this letter he speaks of the Basque, of which he was then "a three days' scholar," stating briefly "what appear to me to be the great principles of the language." These were: "1. The ^{Principles of the Basque} language is polysynthetic and post-positive. 2. language. There is no distinction of gender. 3. The noun, substantive or adjective, is in itself uninflected. 4. The distinctions of case or number are marked by the article postfixed. 5. The article is inflected in number and case by postfixes, some of them significant particles. 6. The adjective is placed after the noun, and the article thus postfixed to the adjectives. 7. The personal demonstrative pronouns and the cardinal numerals have postfixed inflections nearly like those of the article. The possessive pronouns and ordinals are declined with the article like nouns. 8. The verb is conjugated by polysynthetic substantive postfixes, variable in number, person, tense, mood, and conjugation, and including the subject, the direct and transitive or relative object, and some other modes of action. 9. The principal verb, in all the forms of the verb, is used only in the infinitive; of this there are eleven forms; this infinitive always stands first, and in any particular form is uninflected. 10. Other modifications of the verb are determined by the substantive postfix, which is the substantive verb (infinitive), variously inflected by affixes *pro* and *post*, according to the genius of the language. These postfixes are very various,

and determine the numbers and persons, in part the tenses, the moods, and the conjugations, which, like the Hebrew conjugations, are rather modifications of being or acting than varieties of inflection, as in the Greek and Latin conjugations.





CHAPTER XVII.

1834-1842.

GEOLOGICAL EXCURSIONS. — REMINISCENCES OF PROFESSOR TICKNOR. — AN UNEXPECTED GUEST. — HIS PECUNIARY TROUBLES. — RELIEVED BY A LOAN. — REMINISCENCES OF MR. MONSON. — STEPS TO THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CONNECTICUT. — HIS OWN HISTORY OF THE SURVEY. — HOW THE REPORT WAS COMPLETED AND RECEIVED. — A LETTER TO SIR CHARLES LYELL. — REMARKS IN THE JOURNAL OF SCIENCE.

IN the summer of this year he made several geological excursions "in exploring the trap of the two secondary basins of the State" and also in "examining with some minuteness the primitive district between New Haven and the Housatonic." ^{Geological excursions.}

In November he went to Boston to adjust his claim against Mr. Walker for editing *Malte-Brun*, and to make some final corrections to the edition. ^{The end of Malte-Brun.} He was in pressing want of the money to pay a note of several years' standing, for books which he had bought of General Howe; and Professor Ticknor, at whose house he was a welcome guest, advised him to sell his claim, but unfortunately he did not, and soon after Mr. Walker failed in business, involving Percival in unexpected difficulty and loss. Dr. Hayward and Professor Ticknor were then anxious that he should start a paper of his own, and remain in Boston. The follow- ^{Suddenly disappears.}

ing note is the only explanation to one of those sudden changes for which Percival was remarkable :—

Saturday Morning (without date).

SIR, —

I must give up the proposed paper and leave Boston. At present there is no vessel here to take my things where I wish to send them, otherwise I would despatch them immediately. There will probably be one here in the course of a week. If you wish to question me further, I will endeavor to give you all the satisfaction I can.

Yours,

J. G. PERCIVAL.

GEORGE HAYWARD, M. D.

Professor Ticknor tells me that, while a guest at his house in Boston at this time, his ways were peculiar. Sitting at the table opposite to Mrs. Ticknor, he would converse with her husband and sometimes with her with the greatest fluency, but with his eyes downcast upon the plate, always avoiding the glance of Mrs. Ticknor's eye; and this was his habit always among females. The same shrinking from woman was also seen in the drawing-room. And at the homes of his two Boston friends he was probably more at his ease than anywhere else. I have been told that this dropping of the eye (while he apparently saw everything) was observable as he walked the street wrapped in his camlet cloak, "the observed of all observers." While on his Geological Survey of Connecticut, he was often obliged to pick up a meal or a lodging where he could; and his dress was not always such as indicated his character and position. Throughout life he never polished his shoes, and his pants

Reminiscences.

and hat generally showed that they had been used the full time of service. Clad in such a habit he presented himself one evening at the door of a young ^{An unexpected guest.} ladies' seminary, asking, as he was some distance from the village, for supper and a night's lodging. The lady principal met him at the door, and was not inclined to grant his request. He urged it, however, as he was tired and hungry; and she finally yielded, following him into the kitchen, and remaining while he ate his supper. Observing him more minutely, she thought he looked more intelligent than common beggars, and engaged in conversation with him, when she found that he was apparently a well-educated man; and as the conversation went on from one surprise to another, she found that he could talk upon a variety of subjects. The conversation at length turned upon poetry; and the lady, after speaking of other poets, mentioned Percival, and went on to express her enthusiastic admiration of his poetry, to the somewhat startled yet quiet listener; when checking herself she asked, "Do you know Percival? Have you read his poetry?" To which the stranger replied, in his gentle, lisping tone, "I — am — Mr. Percival, and I sometimes write poetry." It is needless to say that he was generously entertained that night, and that the resources of his hostess were exhausted to do him honor.

At this time he contributed, largely for him, to the *New England Magazine*, then edited by Dr. Samuel G. Howe. The money thus earned was expended in foreign books, and these were the aids of his philological studies.

He had now been depending in part for two years upon money advanced to him on the *History of the United States*, the writing of which he continually delayed. Mr. Nathan Whiting had advanced to him at various times on

this contract thirteen hundred dollars. At length he needed the money, and requested him to pay it back, which he had no means of doing. At this juncture, he knew not what to do. His only resource was ^{Hard pushed for money,} either to sacrifice his library or to obtain a loan on his property through the generosity of friends. He accordingly drew up the following paper:—

“The circumstances in which I am placed induce me to make an explicit statement of my affairs, not without the hope that it may lead to some arrangement by which I may extricate myself from embarrassment. I am indebted to the amount of \$1,500, nearly \$1,400 of which is for books. I have an engagement (the History of the United States) by which I can pay something more than my necessary expenses. It is, however, essential to me to raise in some way the sum of \$1,300 to discharge that amount of my debt. I have been disappointed of the means of discharging that sum by events over which I had no control. The greater share of this debt I was partly induced to incur from a proposition made me by the creditor [Mr. Whiting] to engage in an important literary undertaking, a Geography for High Schools. After I had incurred the obligation, that project was abandoned. I was thus unable to discharge it directly by my efforts. In the spring [1832] ^{And a statement of his pecuniary troubles.} after I had issued proposals to my friends for an edition of my poems, J. Grigg, of Philadelphia, proposed to a friend of mine, S. A. Mitchell, to incorporate them in his edition of the English poets, for which he would pay me \$800. Mr. Mitchell then expected to visit New Haven immediately, but was prevented by a long sickness, so that he had no opportunity of seeing me till in the summer. He then stated the proposal ^{Failure of his own efforts.}

to me, to which I assented. In the mean while, the President vetoed the bill rechartering the bank. On his return to Philadelphia, Mr. Mitchell mentioned my acceptance of his terms to Mr. Grigg, who said at once that, had I met his terms at the time they were offered, he would have completed the engagement, but that the veto had so deranged business that he was then obliged to decline. Last year, before the pressure commenced, I was invited by Messrs. Fessenden of Brattleboro, Vermont, to edit an edition of the British Poets, to be included in from ten to fifteen volumes, for which they would pay me \$500 per volume, — two or three volumes to be published annually, — so that the undertaking, if successful, would have been worth to me from \$5,000 to \$7,500, at from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per annum. The agreement was concluded between us. On the pressure arising, the project was suspended, and has since been abandoned.

“ These disappointments have reduced me to the alternative, either of at once surrendering my property, or throwing myself on the generosity of my friends, to enable me, by the exertion of my talents and industry, to extricate myself. An escape for him in only one of two ways. \$800 was offered me for an edition of my poems. If \$600 could be obtained for an edition, (for which I would allow the most reasonable terms as to time, etc.,) and if I could secure an employment of \$700, (one that would reward me fairly for my time,) I could free myself from my obligations. My property (all of which I have in my possession, insured at \$2,500; it has cost me certainly over \$3,000) I would pledge in any way that would be considered satisfactory. I feel confident that if I could be put in the way of exerting myself ad-

vantageously, I could discharge all my obligations in at least two years. My experience has taught me not to incur new ones. I might free myself by surrendering my property ; but the collection I have formed I am unwilling to part with, without trying another experiment. In asking this aid, I rely on the willingness of my friends to use their efforts to render my means (talent, poems, and property) available to me in extricating myself without a sacrifice."

Asks aid,

This proposition met with favor. Mr. Nathaniel Bacon loaned to him, to pay Mr. Whiting, twelve hundred dollars, and twelve gentlemen, his friends residing in New Haven, generously became his personal sureties. The loan was made January 9, 1835, with the understanding that it was to be paid in three years, his library being pledged as his own security to them ; but it ran on till 1841, having in the mean time been diminished only two hundred dollars, when it was transferred to the College, the same gentlemen continuing his sureties. His income had been precarious, even while engaged upon the Geological Survey, and he had no means of discharging his obligations. In 1846, he was honorably released from his contract to write the History ; and the loan now transferred from the College to the Townsend Savings Bank in New Haven, was finally paid out of the avails of his Wisconsin Geological Survey.

Which is granted.

To the earlier part of this year, and after he had exchanged his office in Broadway for rooms in Chapel Street, I am inclined to assign much that occurs in the following communication. His own materials for a biographical record now become rare, and I am chiefly indebted for the remainder of the work to the kindness and sympathy of his numerous friends. He was henceforth

less in contact with his fellow-men. His literary engagements were few, and mostly of a scientific character. He was never a professed correspondent; and his letters were always either long confidential statements of his feelings and condition, or simply notes of business. The following is from Mr. Charles Monson, and throws much light upon his occupations at this time.

TO THE EDITOR.

NEW HAVEN, June, 1865.

DEAR SIR,—

The late Mr. H. Augur and the late Mr. E. C. Herrick were the eminently worthy and confidential ^{Mr. Augur and Mr. E. C. Herrick.} friends of Dr. Percival; but my acquaintance with him was, for the most part, accidental; it grew out of an intimacy with Mr. Augur, at whose rooms I used often to meet him. With Mr. Augur, or with Mr. Herrick, or with both, the Doctor was accustomed to advise, whenever and from whatever cause he was annoyed in his business affairs. It may not be inappropriate here to mention that I had frequent occasion to observe the regard and profound respect of Mr. Augur for Percival's high order of intellect, and for his large and varied acquirements; but I have more than once noticed his kindly, sympathizing smile in remarking upon the Doctor's childlike simplicity and inexperience in everything relating to business transactions. My frequent meetings with Mr. Augur at length brought me into some degree of familiarity with the Doctor; and he sometimes (not frequently) honored me by a call. I found him not to be the very reserved, taciturn, ^{Percival a free talker.} and almost sour individual I had once imagined

him to be, but, on the contrary, a free talker, communicative, and genial, — with this condition, however, that you must let him do the talking, and (when he was in the mood) pretty much all of it. It was well to regard this condition, both because it was worth while to hear him, and because it was useless to have much to say till he had fairly ceased.

Percival once had rooms in the upper story of our State Hospital. That building, not as now, was then almost unoccupied, except by the housekeeper or janitor who took care of the grounds. I called there on him several times, inquiring for information on some subject involving science, in which I was uninformed. Passing The entrance up two flights of stairs, I would find his entry to his study. door tied by a rope at the knob, and thus fastened on the inside. A slight rap would always bring him to the door. He would untie the rope, receive me pleasantly, and converse, standing in the entry, no matter how long; but it was not his practice to ask a visitor in.

There are men, I suppose, with whom fame is about the only immortality which they have very much faith in. I do not like to believe that Percival was one of those. I think that he desired to be remembered, that he was not insensible to the motive of fame. But I am sure that he had very little, perhaps none, of that common vanity which feeds on admiration, and makes one delighted in being pointed out and shown up to stupid starers. A story. A stranger, a showy gentleman with extra airs, had been escorting some ladies, on a summer day, through the Hospital grounds, and then called on the janitor, remarking that he understood the poet Percival was occupying rooms in the upper story of the building, and that he would be extremely gratified to be shown the way up. The janitor

went with the stranger to the foot of the second flight of stairs, pointed to the door, and awaited the reception. The gentleman's signal-knock was answered by the footsteps of the Doctor, who unloosened the fastening, and on opening the door, beheld the stranger and a lady on each arm. "I am extremely happy," said the eloquent intruder, in a measured and pompous accent,—"I am extremely happy and rejoiced that I have the honor of addressing the poet Percival." "*Boo*," responded the Doctor, instantly shutting the door, readjusting the fastening, and retiring to his room. This anecdote was not related by the Doctor, nor was it ever referred to by himself that I know of.

I once called on Percival to show him specimens of some iron ore, which I had broken out of what seemed a small vein in one of the island rocks An excursion. near to shore, a few miles from New Haven. He suggested going with me to the locality,—a suggestion which I was glad to accept; and as we might get tired of one thing, I proposed to take fishing gear with us, it being in the black-fishing season. I think it was his first fishing adventure. After looking around and hammering a little, we sat upon the rocks and cast in our lines. We had a pretty good time, taking it altogether, and captured fifty-five blackfish,—one of us twenty-seven, the other twenty-eight. Toward evening, rowing ourselves ashore, we had a spare hour to wait for the cars, and to have a rambling talk and to get supper at the hotel. "I have heard the remark," said I to the Doctor, "that you, of all the men in America, are the man to make our English His opinion of making a Dictionary himself. Dictionary." I do not remember precisely his reply. It was modest, but I know that the impression made by it on my mind was such as to assure me that he had sufficient faith in his own ability to excel in such an

enterprise, and that he thought there was room enough for improvement; and I suggested the question whether it were not worth his while to take up the task as a life-work. He replied by referring to the certain hostility of rival interests, which he felt that he could not encounter without sacrificing the peace and quiet of his life. As we returned from our excursion, it became quite a puzzle to the Doctor what to do with our game, — the fish we had caught. So stopping at a fish-shop, he had two of them dressed for himself, which he took home to his bachelor's hall, and the rest I sold to the dealer for cash, for mutual benefit, and thus ended the adventure.

There was a time when the subject of music seemed entirely to occupy the Doctor's thoughts. Very likely you may know more about this than I do. I know that he was inquisitive about old books containing musical notes of bygone days, or of distant lands, — that he delighted to pick up, and to touch off, ancient and rare little musical airs; and that he sometimes carried an accordion under his old blue camlet cloak. I met him one day in Mr. Augur's room thus equipped; and, as soon as it seemed to be convenient, he introduced his then favorite topic, and proposed giving a touch of an old air which he had lately found. Drawing out his accordion, he leaned forward in the attitude and with the movements as if he were playing, his throat at the same time swelling as in singing, — but the motions were all. We were attracted by his intense expression, his sharp face, and delighted look, when he suddenly turned and asked how we liked it. Mr. Augur smiled, and I exclaimed, "Ha! ha! why, Doctor, you have not uttered the first sound." "Why! did n't you *hear* it?" said he. The Doctor heard it undoubtedly; but it was only by the ear of his imagination.

Becomes a
musician.

When he undertook his Geological Survey of Connecticut, he was not at first the recipient of very polite attentions in the rural districts where he was not known. But the farmers after a while found him out, and though among themselves they called him "the old rock-smasher," he gradually won a respect which his first appearance did not always inspire. The keeper of a country inn, as I have been told, once mistaking him for some eccentric vagrant, accosted him harshly; but as the Doctor was leaving his door, a distinguished citizen from a neighboring town drove up, alighted from his carriage, and grasped the Doctor's hand with all possible expressions of cordiality and respect. The astonished landlord, seeing that he had made a particular blunder, felt chagrined, and, apologizing, retired. . . .

CHARLES MONSON.

Considerable interest had now been excited in this country in regard to Geology, and it soon became the ambition of each State to have investigations made by scientific gentlemen into its sources of mineral wealth. The interest which the elder Silliman had awakened in such pursuits at Yale had spread to other and similar institutions, each of which now had its professor in some department of Natural History. At Amherst College, the late Edward Hitchcock had already become eminent as a scientific explorer, and as early as 1830 had been appointed by the Legislature to make a geological survey of the State of Massachusetts. In 1832 he published his first Report on the Economic Geology of that State; and, in 1833, a second Report on its Geology, Zoölogy, and Botany. These Reports turned the attention of each State to its own physical resources, and

initiated those general and expensive surveys which have
Steps to the
survey of
Connecticut. done so much in our own country to advance
 the interests of science and to develop internal
 wealth. The Connecticut Legislature, composed like
 most of our State Legislatures, very much of practical
 workingmen, farmers, and others from the country,
 wished to know the geological resources of the State. In
 May, 1835, an appropriation was made for this object, and
Percival
appointed
geologist. shortly after Dr. Percival and Professor Charles
 W. Shepard were appointed by Governor Ed-
 wards for the work. The Legislature unfortunately ex-
 pected only a superficial examination, — at least, a very
 brief, practical report of the available mineral resources.
 They only cared how they might render more valuable
 the various mines and quarries. Few of them knew any-
 thing about geology, or had any sympathy in promoting
 the interests of science; and Percival was the last man
 to perform satisfactorily such superficial work. Professor
 Shepard took the mineralogical department of the sur-
 vey, and after a few months' travel made an octavo Report
 of two hundred pages, which met every requirement.

His duties. Percival's department was the geological; and
 he was engaged upon it five weary and labori-
 ous years; each year rendering his researches more and
 more minute, until he had collected eight thousand speci-
 mens, and had made records of dips and bearings still
 more numerous. The task was developing before his
 truly scientific method into the work of a lifetime. Of
 this method he remarks, in one of the brief yearly Reports
Is guided by
the authority
of nature. which he was obliged to make to satisfy the de-
 mands of legislators, who grew uneasy in waiting
 so long for practical results: "I have endeavored to be
 guided by no other authority than *nature*; not that I in

the least disregarded or undervalued the labors of those who had preceded me, but because I was satisfied that my only chance for determining the system was to confine myself solely to the objects under investigation, and to endeavor to trace my way through by the most careful examination and comparison of them. That I have done so, I can say with confidence, though much of the time under circumstances extremely unfavorable and discouraging." Of such a carefully conducted investigation, which would ultimately be of the highest value to the economic interests of the State, as well as a lasting monument to its liberal enterprise in encouraging scientific studies, the sturdy men who made the laws of Connecticut in those days had no conception. The chief executive of the State had so low an opinion of the value of Percival's labors during the latter and trying period of the survey, while he was suffering from the want of appropriations to enable him to conduct the work in a suitable manner, as to call him playfully "a literary loafer"; and such encouragement from such a source paralyzed his efforts to obtain sufficient grants of money to properly prosecute his labors, though there is every evidence in the correspondence between him and Percival that the Governor tried honestly to discharge his duty to the State. The trouble was, he did not understand Percival, and knew little about his difficult and embarrassing circumstances. At this juncture, when without an appropriation from the State or a loan from private individuals he felt that he could not go on, his friend, the Honorable Aaron N. Skinner, the first and the foremost in every good work, came to his rescue, and advised him to address a letter immediately to the Honorable R. S. Baldwin, who was a member of the Legislature, detailing the

Governor
 Ellsworth's
 opinion of
 him.

history of the survey and explaining its present condition. He complied with Mr. Skinner's request, and wrote the following about May 20, 1841:—

TO ROGER SHERMAN BALDWIN.

DEAR SIR,—

At your request, communicated to me through the
Letter to Mr. Baldwin. Honorable Mr. Skinner of the Senate, I have prepared the following statement of my connection with the Geological Survey of the State. The first appropriation (one thousand dollars) was made in 1835, under the auspices of Governor Edwards. But the year previous (1834) I employed nearly five months in exploring the trap connected with the secondary of the State, on my own account and at my own expense. This was an important and essential part of the survey. The results I communicated to the Connecticut Academy, at the house of Mr. Skinner, soon after I had completed that exploration. Before the meeting of the Legis-
His engagement upon the survey. lature in 1835, Governor Edwards consulted me with regard to his proposed plan of survey. I then declined engaging in it, as I had literary engagements which I did not feel at liberty to withdraw from, and which promised me a remuneration which I needed. I recommended him to intrust the survey to the charge of Professor Silliman, and also to procure the services of Professor Shepard. Governor Edwards recommended the survey to the Legislature, and obtained an appropriation of one thousand dollars. I have been informed by two members of the committee (Colonel White of Danbury, and the late Mr. Sheldon Clark of Oxford) that they

considered this a very inadequate sum for accomplishing the survey, but that they did not think it advisable to urge a larger sum at first. Both of them observed to me that I must carry on the survey in the best manner I could to its completion, and look to successive Legislatures for support. Governor Edwards having obtained an appropriation, offered the charge of the survey to Professor Silliman. He declined it in a manner offensive to the feelings of Governor Edwards, and besides informed him that he need not apply to Professor Shepard, as he was better employed. Governor Edwards then applied to me. I again declined, on account of my literary engagements, but offered to use my endeavors to procure the services of Professor Shepard. I called upon him and he expressed his readiness to undertake the mineralogical if I would undertake the geological department, — otherwise he entirely refused to engage in the survey. I yielded to his and Governor Edwards's requests, and having procured a release from my literary engagements, devoted myself to the prosecution of the survey. The one thousand dollars was divided equally between us: two hundred and fifty dollars was advanced to each for expenses; the remaining two hundred and fifty dollars paid at the end of the year. I travelled that season with Professor Shepard four months (July to October inclusive), and then through the month of November alone, making five months of exploration that year. While in company we visited every town and every parish in the State but one or two, and directed our attention particularly to subjects of economical interest (mines worked or abandoned, and quarries). We travelled necessarily so rapidly that I could only make a very

Professor
Silliman de-
clines it.

Professor
Shepard
consents to
go with him.

The survey
begun.

hasty reconnoissance of the geology of the State preparatory to a proper survey. To supply deficiencies, I travelled an additional month both in the eastern and western parts of the State, after Mr. Shepard had gone on his duties as professor at Charleston. I prepared for the

Makes an
outline
Report. next Legislature (that of 1836) an outline Report of the geology of the State, as far as my materials then allowed, accompanied with a geological map of the State, and also a more minute Report of the geology of the southeast part of the western primary section, as a specimen of the manner in which I aimed at completing the survey. We suggested to the Legislature the propriety of continuing the survey another year, with an appropriation more correspondent to the allowance made to surveyors in other States. Our suggestion was accepted, and an appropriation was made (1836) of two thousand dollars, to be equally divided between us. Previous to this, during the winter of 1835-36, a very large appropriation was made for a geological survey by the Legislature of New York. I was invited, before the meeting of our Legislature, by a friend who had conferred with Governor Marcy, to offer myself for a place in that survey, with an assurance that my claim would be favorably received. I declined the offer, as I was unwilling to withdraw from the survey of my own State, while so incomplete as I then considered it. The compensation in New York was liberal beyond anything I could expect here.

The appropriation of 1836 was disposed of in the same manner as the preceding, — one thousand dollars was allotted to me, five hundred dollars advanced for expenses. I had found my objects the former year so different from Professor Shepard's, that I considered it im-

portant that I should travel by myself. I intended to travel on foot; but I was instructed by Governor Edwards to travel with a horse for greater expedition, as he was desirous that I should complete my exploration, if possible, by November. I yielded on this point, much to my disadvantage, as it considerably more than doubled my expenses, and rendered it impossible to prosecute my survey with the regularity I intended. I now commenced a plan of survey across the State from east to west, but my horse prevented me from following them with the same regularity I could have done on foot. I adhered to them, however, as nearly as I could. This year I made them at average intervals of four miles. I began the plan of completing my explorations, agreeably to instructions, by November; but I soon found that more time was necessary to render my survey at all satisfactory. I therefore slackened my pace, and did not complete my exploration till January. During this time I lost only one or two week-days. When I had completed travelling, the five hundred dollars allowed me was exhausted in expenses. I then applied to Governor Edwards, and on due consideration he made me a further advance of two hundred and fifty dollars. I then applied myself closely to a minute examination of the materials I had now collected. This examination I did not complete by the meeting of the Legislature in 1837. I made a written statement of what I had done for the survey, of what remained to be done before preparing a Report, and also suggested that, in my opinion, a re-exploration of the State, on a plan at least as extensive as that of the former year, was very important for a satisfactory completion of the survey. I had spent the whole year exclusively devoted to the survey, whereas

Has to travel
with a horse.

His plan of
survey.

Professor Shepard had travelled but four months (I had travelled seven), and spent in the whole not more than six months in the duties of the survey. I had much to do before I could complete a Report.

Influenced by these considerations, the committee recommended an appropriation of five hundred dollars, as an additional compensation for my services during the past year, payable on the completion of the Report; and, agreeably to my suggestion, a further appropriation of fifteen hundred dollars for the completion of the survey. The appropriations thus proposed were made by the Legislature. You were then a member of the Senate.

Not ready for a Report. I continued the examination of my materials during the summer of 1837; and after I had completed it, I spent a few weeks as a relaxation from long and close confinement, in further examination of particular objects connected with the survey. I then applied myself to the composition of a Report, which I completed and presented to Governor Edwards on the 1st of January, 1838. This Report, it was understood, should not be published; and I prepared it with that intention. I calculated that it would extend to more than four hundred printed 8vo pages. I intended it as a minute and systematic digest of the materials I had then collected, which

At work on his materials. I might use myself in preparing my final Report, after I had completed my resurvey of the State, and which, in case of my death or disability, might be used by others, so that the money expended and my own labor might not be lost. After the Legislature had risen, Governor Edwards made a further advance to me from the appropriation of 1836, and informed me that the whole of the balance of that appropriation was at my service,

if necessary, to enable me to complete my Report. I had not occasion, however, to call for the whole. The balance, with the additional five hundred dollars appropriated in 1837, was paid me on presenting my Report. I will here add, that it was through the liberal course pursued by Governor Edwards that I was enabled Kindness of Governor Edwards. to prepare that Report. Had he refused me any additional advance after the first advance of five hundred dollars, I should have been obliged to stop in January, 1837; and if, instead of sustaining me in the Legislature that year, he had excited prejudice against me by charging me with unnecessarily spending more time than was required, the survey would have terminated abortively at that point. But instead of that, he generously sustained me up to the completion of the Report. He confided in me; and thus sustained, I did not disappoint his confidence. I completed an ample, and, I will say, carefully prepared Report.

I had now explored the secondary trap of the State (at my own expense), and discovered a system What he had done. of arrangement, common both to the trap and its accompanying sandstone, entirely new, as I believe, and important, not only to science, but for economical purposes, as, indeed, all science is in greater or less degree. I had reconnoitred the State in company with Professor Shepard, and had examined particularly most of its mines and quarries in their geological relations. I had carried through as regular an exploration as my mode of travelling would permit, by sections from east to west, at average intervals of four miles. I had collected copious materials in notes and specimens. I had carefully examined and digested these, and prepared a full Report. I had thus spent more than two years and a half. I had

hitherto met with little difficulty in the survey, and, although my compensation for my whole time was but about seven hundred dollars a year, out of which I had to defray all my expenses, and during the interval I had travelled most of my time, in obedience to instructions, in a comparatively expensive manner, so as really to leave little or nothing as a clear compensation, yet I am not now disposed to complain of that period. On presenting my Report (January, 1838), I requested an advance for the expenses of a resurvey, as under former appropriations. Governor Edwards informed me that he was not at liberty to make any advance, as the resolution of 1837 was so restricted that nothing could be paid me till the completion of a Report. The resolution prepared by the

Trouble from
the Legisla-
ture. committee, and seen by me, was in the terms of former resolutions, leaving it at the discretion of the Governor to make advances for expenses. The resolution was altered after I had left Hartford, and without my knowledge, and no intimation of the change was communicated to me. I wrote for information to Henry Barnard, Esq., of Hartford, who was chairman of the committee of the House on the survey. He informed me that the change was made at the request of Governor Edwards, and recommended me to spend a few weeks in additional exploration, if necessary, and work up the Report I had prepared, into a final Report, and take the fifteen hundred dollars appropriated the preceding year (1837). I showed Mr. Barnard's letter to Governor Edwards. He answered me to this effect, that that was a question for me to decide, that whatever I chose to present as a final Report he should feel bound to accept as such, and that he should be happy to present my final Report to the ensuing Legislature. It was thus entirely in my power to have realized the whole

fifteen hundred dollars (of which five hundred dollars has been withheld from me during the past year), three years since, with little additional labor. I replied that I had suggested that appropriation as the means of enabling me to complete a resurvey of the State, at least as minute as the one I had last made; that I considered myself pledged to make such survey, or leave the money in the treasury. That I might lose no time, I then reserved three hundred dollars of the five hundred paid me on completing my Report for expenses; and this sum has been expended, without return, in performing the duties of the survey. It enabled me to get through the expenses of the two ensuing years, 1838 and 1839 (to May, 1840), with only an advance of five hundred dollars per annum.

I commenced exploring immediately (in January, 1838), and continued it through that winter when not obstructed (for perhaps three weeks) by deep ^{In the field.} snow. I now travelled entirely on foot. Till early in April, I was employed in exploring four very extensive trap dikes connected with the primary rocks of the State, one of which entirely crosses the State from the Sound (in Bradford) into Holland, Massachusetts. During this exploration, I particularly examined the rocks with which these dikes are connected. These dikes I consider as systematically arranged, in an important relation to the trap system, connected with the secondary, and are thus, as I conceive, of the highest interest to geological science, whatever may be their economical bearings. Their exploration could not have been omitted in a complete survey of the State. During that winter an ^{The survey unpleasant, but he begins a resurvey;} event occurred of a domestic nature which has rendered my connection with the survey, since

that time, peculiarly irksome and painful, but on which I forbear to dwell further. In April, 1838, I commenced my regular plan of resurvey. This was by sections from east to west, half-way between my former sections, thus reducing the intervals to average distances of two miles, and bringing me in contact with every square mile in the State (4,674 square miles). I now adopted the plan of

And travels on foot. travelling on foot, which I regret I had not adopted at first, not only as reducing my ex-

penses, but from its superior advantages in carrying on the survey. I determined, too, to be more minute in my examinations, and more particular in my notes and collections of specimens; for, although in my former survey I had been more minute than I believe the case in other surveys, yet I was satisfied I had fallen considerably behind what was necessary for the exact determination of the geological system of the State. I completed by the meeting of the Legislature (1838) my first tour in the western primary district, in a section along the coast from West Haven to the New York line, and back to Westport. This enabled me to calculate the amount of labor I had to perform to complete my plan of survey. A committee

A committee appointed in regard to the survey.

was raised on the subject of the survey, and I communicated to them my plan, stating to them that it would require the whole year at least, if I travelled all the time, to complete my plan, and requesting such an alteration in the appropriating resolution of 1837 as would enable the Governor to make advances for my expenses. A resolution to that effect was passed; and Governor Ellsworth, in consequence, made me an advance of five hundred dollars. He accompanied this advance with some expressions which led me to doubt his cordiality. I consulted Mr. Barnard (again chairman of

the committee of the House), but he assured me that I might rely on the most liberal course on the part of Governor Ellsworth, even more so than that of the preceding executive. I explained to Mr. Barnard the extent of my plan, and that without the cordial support of Governor Ellsworth it would be wrong for me to proceed. He told me not to fear any illiberality, but to proceed without hesitation.

As soon as the resolution was altered and the advance made, I renewed my exploration and continued it till December. I had intended to continue the survey through the winter, and so on without interruption to its completion; but I had now travelled most laboriously (as I will afterwards explain), and with little interruption for eleven months, and I felt the absolute necessity for some repose. I, however, applied myself during the winter, after I had recovered from the exhaustion of fatigue, to the examination of my materials. The circumstance to which I have alluded above, more especially, as well as others, now urged me to bring the survey, if possible, to a completion, so as to enable me to receive the balance of the appropriation, and to direct my attention, if I could find such, to some more remunerative employment. I therefore, in February, 1839, called on Governor Ellsworth for advice; but he duly told me that he had not attended to the subject, that he knew nothing of it, and that I must do what I thought proper. I then applied to Mr. Barnard (as chairman of the committee) and proposed to him to prepare a final Report, leaving more than one third of the State unexplored in this resurvey, on condition that the balance of the appropriation should be paid me on presenting such a Report, and the survey be considered as completed. I

Needs repose, and takes it chiefly in examining his materials.

stated that I could prepare such a Report, if it would be accepted, in season for the Legislature, and that I could not carry out my plan to completion without great hardship, unless the State allowed me further support. Mr. Barnard replied that such a Report would not be accepted

Is pressed
hard in the
survey,

as final, that I must complete my plan of survey, and look to the future action of the Legislature.

I then resolved to carry out my plan of survey, as long as I had the means of doing it; and as soon as the weather permitted, recommenced (in March) my plan of survey, and continued travelling till the meeting of the Legislature. I had stated verbally in my interview with Governor Ellsworth what I had done for the survey since the completion of my former Report (which Report had been in his possession, and which he had returned to me for my use during the continuance of the survey) and

And slighted
by the Gov-
ernor.

also what yet remained for the completion of my plan. I was not a little surprised to find in his message, after a statement of the sum appropriated and expended for the survey, and some remarks on its large amount, no allusion to my former Report, but a statement that he had received no Report from me, and that he knew nothing of the progress of the survey. These remarks I considered calculated to prejudice the public mind injuriously against me. I, however, presented a written statement to the Legislature, through the Governor, particularizing the circumstances of the survey, the time I had expended, and the labor yet necessary for its completion, and stating that, without further compensation, I could not complete the survey without a great sacrifice. I stated the time I had expended, the amount I had received and remaining unexpended; that under the most favorable circumstances, I could not complete a Re-

port in a year from that time so as to do justice to my materials or the subject; and I proposed for the ^{His trials} consideration of the Legislature less than half ^{with the} Legislature. the amount that would have been allowed me for the same time, if I had been connected with the New York survey, according to the terms originally offered there, which had since been raised, namely, two thousand dollars over and above what had been already appropriated; but I certainly did not intend to dictate to the Legislature, nor do I think my language, either then or at any preceding or succeeding period, could any way bear such a construction. I was urged to state what I wished, and I did so as appropriately as I could. A committee was raised, of which the Honorable Amos Hendee of the Senate was chairman. The committee met. I was called upon by the chairman to make out an account in due mercantile form. I did so. The chairman just looked at it, and, after a few rude remarks, dismissed the subject and the committee. Some of the committee of the House were friendly to me, and succeeded in obtaining a Report, recommending that five hundred dollars should be advanced me for the ensuing year. This Report was accepted. I had before applied to Governor Ellsworth for such an advance, but he refused to make it without the sanction of the Legislature. After the sanction was given, I succeeded in obtaining the advance, after some delay, which caused me in the whole a delay of nearly a month.

I then continued my regular plan of exploration, till its completion in August. After the unfavorable reception of my application to the Legisla- ^{Completes} ^{his explora-} ^{tions.} ture, I received a line from J. H. Townsend, Esq., urging me, in his own name and that of Mr. Henry Bar-

nard, not to be disheartened, but to carry out my plan to its completion, with a confidence that I should be sustained and rewarded. I will not deny that I felt myself encouraged by that communication, especially as it was entirely unsolicited. When I had completed my regular plan of survey, in August, I called upon Mr. Townsend at his office, and found him in company with Mr. John A. Rockwell of Norwich, then a member of the Senate, who had before shown himself friendly to me in relation to this survey. I stated to them that I had now completed my regular plan of survey, and requested their advice as to the course I should pursue in relation to the preparation of a Report, whether to aim merely at the preparation of a final Report for the next Legislature, without attempting the regular examination of my materials, or to make the most complete use I could of my materials, without looking to the preparation of a Report for the next Legislature; for I felt certain, from my former experience, that I could not use my materials to any purpose, and accomplish the latter object. They advised me, by all means, to make the best use of my materials, and trust to future Legislatures. I followed their advice, and proceeded to make a minute examination of my materials, beginning at the southern border (on the Sound) of the western primary. I continued this examination till February or March, 1840, and was enabled satisfactorily to determine that, with the most complete use of my materials, I could determine the primary geology of the State, if not with perfect minuteness and accuracy, yet with a higher degree of distinctness than I had yet observed in my reading. At the time last alluded to, I was again importuned to prepare some sort of a Re-

Is advised
to make the
best and
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use of his
materials.

His accu-
racy.

port for the Legislature. I then made a more cursory examination of my materials, drew up a new geological map of the State, and prepared a statement which I made to the committee of the session of 1840. The Geological Survey was not noticed in the message for that year. At my request, Mr. Foster, of Norwich, introduced a resolution for a Committee of Inquiry on the Survey. This resolution was adopted, and he was appointed chairman of the committee of the House. I take this opportunity to express my acknowledgments of his friendly exertions in my behalf. Against the wishes of my friends, Mr. Hendee was again appointed on the committee from the Senate. I made a statement and exhibition to the committee, and was sustained before them by Governor Edwards, Professor Silliman, and Drs. Tully and Hooker. The committee of the ^{Conduct of}
^{the Legisla-}
^{ture.} House gave me to understand that they proposed a grant of two thousand dollars, payable on completion of the Report, but that Mr. Hendee refused his sanction, but said that he would sanction and sustain with his voice and vote a grant of one thousand dollars, provided the Report was completed by April 20, 1841. They were obliged to yield to these terms, or expect his opposition. They, therefore, prepared a resolution, appropriating that sum (one thousand dollars), payable on completing the Report, provided it be completed by April 20, 1841. The Report accompanying the resolution recommended the advance to me of the five hundred dollars remaining of the appropriation of 1837 for expenses during the ensuing year. The report was sent to Mr. Hendee for his signature, whereupon he introduced it directly into the Senate, contrary to the usual practice in such cases and to the expectation of the committee. He then opposed it, contrary to his

understood pledge, and the resolution was rejected by the casting vote of the Lieutenant-Governor, if I mistake not. It was sent down to the House, sustained by Mr. Foster, opposed by no one, and passed, as I was assured by the Speaker, almost without a dissenting voice. After several unsuccessful attempts to get it through the Senate, Mr. Terry, who had opposed it, was induced to move a reconsideration, on condition that the resolution be further restricted as it now stands, namely, that a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, the amount to be determined by a committee (Governor Ellsworth, Professor Silliman, and the Honorable S. K. Wightman), should be paid me on completing a Report by the 20th of April, 1841. This was passed at the last moment of the session. As soon as I could obtain an interview with the Governor, I requested an advance of the five hundred dollars, as I had been led to expect it by the committee of the House. It was refused; and the refusal was accompanied with reproaches for spending so much time on the survey, and obtaining so much money as I had done from the Legislature. In a written communication, I endeavored to justify my application, but received no more favorable answer. I will not any further detail the personal ill treatment I have received from different persons, both publicly and privately.

I was thus, after having abandoned literary under-
His own con- takings of importance to me, after having de-
dition. voted five years most laboriously to the survey, for a sum which in other States would be considered a scanty allowance for expenses, and after having been long detached from all other occupations, I was thus cut off from all resources, and subjected, as I conceived under the circumstances, to a dishonoring resolution.

I will now proceed to give a condensed view of what I had done for the survey up to the session of 1840. I had twice surveyed the whole State A condensed view of the survey. on a regular plan of sections from east to west, reducing the intervals in the last survey to an average distance of two miles; thus passing along one side of each of the nearly five thousand square miles of the State. In the first survey I had employed seven months, in the last nearly a year of constant travel. I had examined all objects of geological interest, particularly the rocks and those including minerals, with minute attention. I had scarcely passed a ledge or point of rock without particular examination. I had completed eleven manuscript volumes, amounting to nearly fifteen hundred pages, very finely written in abbreviation. I had collected specimens from at least eight thousand localities, according to a very reduced calculation from actual enumeration of one town, and several specimens from each locality, — each specimen intended to illustrate something peculiar and noticed in my notes, — all my specimens marked on the papers enclosing them, and checked in my note-books, so that I know their precise locality, and could again trace them to the spot where I found them. In all these researches, from the commencement, I had had in view the determination of the geological system of the rocks of the State. All these researches had been a continued process, not only of particular examination, but of comparison and reflection, all tending to the determination of the great system. I say with the confidence of conviction, He has discovered a new system of arrangement. — of that conviction which arises from long-continued devotion to the subject, — that I have determined in my mind the system of arrangement, that it is a new system with me, the result of my own unassisted

observation, one which I have not traced in my reading, and one which I believe to be of the highest importance, not only to science, but for economical purposes. But the system is very complex, and to do full justice to its development requires ample time and reasonable resources.

Besides this more general plan of survey, I had specially explored and traced out the trap, both
The trap. connected with the primary and secondary, and determined a new and important system of arrangement, apparently applicable to both, and one, too, of which I have found no traces in my reading. In this investigation I had expended nearly eight months' travel. Besides this, I had expended nearly as much time in the general reconnoissance of the State the first year of the survey, and in particular investigations, making in the whole nearly three years' constant travel. I had written one long Report, which, with the preceding minute examination of materials, had occupied the greater part of a year. The rest of the time had been employed in examining my materials or in preparing for statements made to different Legislatures. While engaged in the survey, I can confidently say I have been laborious and diligent. While
His method while travelling. travelling, it was my practice to rise early, in the longer days generally at dawn; in the shorter generally I got breakfast and was on my way by day-break. I continued, scarcely with any relaxation, as long as I had daylight, and then was generally obliged to sit up till midnight, not unfrequently till one o'clock, A. M., in order to complete my notes and arrange my specimens. This was continued, not only week after week, but month after month, almost without cessation. While engaged in examining my materials and preparing my Report, I was no less closely employed, and this without the advan-

tage of exercise which my field employments gave me. I say confidently, that never in my life, although I have applied myself very closely to many other objects, have I given intenser application to any object than to this survey. Up to the session of 1840, I had employed five years on the survey, and had received three thousand dollars, averaging six hundred dollars per annum, out of which I had defrayed all expenses, travelling expenses included. I need not enlarge on this point. I was then required to prepare a Report, cut off from all resources, deprived of that pittance of five hundred dollars which I might have secured two years before almost without additional labor, if I had regarded my own interest Feels that he has been dishonored. only, with a resolution before me which might allow me something or nothing, and which, under the circumstances, I could not but consider as dishonoring.

It is true I have expended a considerable part of the past year on subjects connected with the survey. I have written part of a Report, but I do not claim I have devoted the past year to the survey. It has, however, been lost to me for any effective purpose. I have felt, under the circumstances in which I have been placed, I could not prepare a Report which would do credit or justice to myself, to the subject, or to the State. I felt that I was driven into a Report under depressing disadvantages. But I will say that, if the Legislature will place the matter on the footing that it was placed by the committee of last year, namely, will renew an unconditional appropriation of one thousand dollars, and allow the advance of the five hundred dollars remaining of the appropriation of 1837, they may rely on a Report from me in season for publication before the meeting of the next Legislature. If they will treat me with the confidence that Governor Edwards

and the Legislature of 1837 showed me, they may expect a like result, — a seasonable Report.

In the remarks I have made in relation to Governor Ellsworth and others, I should be sorry to be supposed to intend any reflection on their conduct. I am willing to believe that they acted from a conscientious sense of duty, but the effect has not been the less painful and oppressive to me. I feel in myself a full consciousness that, in this survey, I have not been governed by motives of personal gain. I have sought earnestly and with entire singleness of heart to accomplish the great object I had before me. If the grant above proposed is made, it will be but a small compensation for the time and labors expended. The object I have had in view is to place the geology of the State on a solid basis, to determine its actual system of arrangement, — a system which once determined will last as long as time, or at least as long as the human race. This system I consider not only of the greatest interest to science, — for it will furnish a key by which the system of the whole Atlantic primary region of the United States and of British America may be developed, and perhaps one of more extensive application, — but of very high importance to the economical interests of the State. I can say with confidence, that all the “useful” rocks and minerals of the State are connected distinctly and definitely with particular formations or members of the system I have endeavored to trace out. Without a knowledge of this system, all search for such objects must be made at hazard; with it, they can be sought for with the aid of an intelligent guide. The iron, the copper, the cobalt, and other metals, the lime and cement, the barytes, the valuable rocks, all have strict

Does not intend to cast any reflection on Governor Ellsworth.

His object in the survey.

The advantages of his system.

geological relations, and by a knowledge of the geological system, not only the places where they can be sought with a chance of success, but the places where they cannot be sought without almost certain loss, may be determined. A knowledge of the geological system is also of great importance to the agriculture of the State. The character of the soils depend upon the rock formations on which they rest, or where there are large accumulations of diluvium or alluvium, on the character of the latter, which can be understood only by a knowledge of the rocks from which they are derived. But I will not dwell further on these topics. I hope, when the gentlemen, even who have opposed me, will inform themselves of what I have done, that they will not refuse me the request I have made above.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

A long difficulty ensued. It was not possible for him to make the use he had intended of the large mass of materials collected, and present his Re-^{The history of the Report.} port in April, 1841; and he could be satisfied with nothing else; while the Legislature began to think that unless they *compelled* him to prepare an immediate Report, he would continue to put the completion off, and that it might never be done. He had already in 1837, as we have seen, prepared a very extensive account of his labors, (of which the published Report is but a hasty outline,) but was unwilling to publish it, until he had availed himself of his new specimens and notes. Meanwhile, the Legislature became imperative, and refused to advance any new grants until the Report was published. In ^{His Report.} despair, Percival sat down in the summer of

1842 to prepare such a Report as he could. It was "written mainly from recollection, with only occasional reference to my materials, and under circumstances little calculated for cool consideration. It was written, however, with an intention to state nothing of the truth or probability of which I did not feel satisfied." It was but an abridgment of the larger work, which is a densely written manuscript, foolscap size, of several hundred pages, probably the most complete and accurate account of any portion of the globe that ever was prepared. It does not sustain the credit of the State for intelligence and enterprise, that this has been allowed to slumber for nearly twenty years. As published in its abridged form, the Report describes with precision the exact relative position and every nicety of distinction of the rocks of the State. No such accuracy has been even attempted in the Reports published

No theories
in it. by other States. But it is curious to observe in it the utter absence of theories and conjectures.

Percival said that he purposely avoided them, regarding it as his duty to present facts alone to the people; but that he had theories, and that his exhaustive collection of facts, especially in regard to the trap, was made in order to verify his theories, he never denied. Many views peculiar to himself have not stood the test of more recent scientific observation; but the detection of the curvilinear (crescent form) arrangement of the trap, which he gives in detail in his Report, is due to him alone.

A letter to Sir Charles Lyell, who, then plain Mr. Lyell,* made his acquaintance when on his visit to this country, in July, 1842, and who shortly after his return to England solicited, through Professor Ticknor, a copy of

* He is reported to have said that Percival was one of the most remarkable men he had ever seen.

Percival's published Report, contains some additional explanations of these theories.

TO SIR CHARLES LYELL.

NEW HAVEN, October 24, 1843.

DEAR SIR, —

In the last number of the American Journal of Science (Professor Silliman's), in that for October, 1843, in the journal of the proceedings of the American Geological Association, is a statement of proceedings in relation to the curvilinear (crescent form) arrangement of trap, which I have laid down in detail, so far as it regards the trap of Connecticut, in my Geological Report, (a copy of which I had the pleasure of sending you, through the London Geological Society, last winter.) In that statement no reference is made to my observations, but credit is given for similar observations to Dr. Whelpley, who is there stated to have communicated his observations to you during your visit to New Haven. Allow me to state that this is the first time that I have seen any reference, in print, to this arrangement of the trap, except in my own Report. This system of arrangement was long since observed by me, as early indeed as when my attention was first directed to geology (when a student), from the circumstance, I may say, that my native place was in the very centre of the larger trap formation in Connecticut (in Berlin, southwest of Hartford). For many years my observations were only incidental, and mostly on the larger and more elevated ridges. But in 1828 I visited the formations in New Jersey, for the purpose of determining their relation

to the two trap formations in Connecticut, when I found there the same curvilinear arrangement; but in reverse order, the convexity of the lines being there towards the east, while in Connecticut it is towards the west. In 1834, as stated in the Preface to my Report, I made a minute exploration of the trap in the two secondary formations in Connecticut; and in December of that year I communicated the result of that exploration to the Connecticut Academy of Sciences, in which I laid down my system of arrangement in detail (with an illustrative map), especially in the same manner as in my Report. Professors Silliman and Shepard were both present at that time, and can testify to this statement. I had before communicated my views to both these gentlemen, and explained them to them, at different localities near New Haven. In 1835 I engaged in the survey of the State; and in 1836, in my first Report to the Legislature, I gave a brief outline of the same arrangement. In the latter part of 1837 I prepared a full Report (now in manuscript), in which I laid down my arrangement of the trap in far more minute detail than in my published Report, (which last is but an abstract of the other, so far as regards the trap connected with the secondary formations.) In the winter of 1837-38, after I had completed my Report, I explored minutely the trap dikes connected with the primary rocks of the State, and ascertained their connection in arrangement with the trap accompanying the secondary, as I have explained it in my published Report. After I had done all this, I explained my views of the arrangement of the trap to Mr. J. D. Dana, (geologist of the American Exploring Expedition,) before he proceeded on his voyage, with a request that he would observe whether the same arrangement prevailed in the trap he

might meet during the voyage. About two years before your visit to New Haven, I explained my views also, in some detail, to Dr. Whelpley (then employed as assistant to Professor Rogers in the Pennsylvania survey), and at the same time directed his attention to a range of trap accompanying red sandstone, crossing the southeast part of that State, and apparently connected with the trap formation in New Jersey, with a request that he would observe whether the same arrangement prevailed there, and whether it was in the Connecticut or New Jersey order. I recollect asking him in your presence whether he found the trap arranged there as I had pointed out to him, which he admitted he had. You will perhaps recollect that I stated to you very briefly my views of the arrangement of the trap, during the excursion in which I accompanied you. I did not then enter into detail, as I was at that time preparing my Report, which I hoped soon to communicate to you.

This system of the arrangement of trap, which has occupied me so long, and which I have laid down in detail in my Report, is with me entirely the result of my own observations. I am sure I have not met any statement of it in the course of my reading, or even any allusion to it, except that in the Proceedings of the Geological Association. I have been informed by Professor J. D. Dana (who was present), that the President (Professor Rogers) introduced his remarks by a reference to the arrangement as laid down in my Report. This, you will observe, is suppressed in the published statement. I am sure Dr. Whelpley will not claim any priority or even originality in relation to the discovery of this system of arrangement, still less Mr. B. Silliman, Jr. This system of arrangement I have endeavored to lay down in my Report as exactly as possible in accordance with observed facts. I cannot

but think it of great interest and importance in relation, not only to the trap rocks, but to geology generally ; nor can I doubt that it will be found to prevail in some form in the trap rocks of Europe. Particularly, I have suspected its occurrence in the trap ranges accompanying the secondary of the Forth and Clyde (Scotland). I cannot but feel a wish to receive the credit (whatever it may be) justly due me for a system which I have worked out with so much time and labor. You will readily know whether it has been yet traced out in Europe. I think I may venture to say that it has not been in this country, except by myself. It is not laid down in Professor Hitchcock's, or Rogers's Reports, both of which treat of the subject of trap, (the former of that of Massachusetts, continued from that of Connecticut, the latter of that of New Jersey.) In my Report I have not given any theoretical view of the mode of formations. Such theoretical views I have purposely avoided in my Report. But the explanation which I have been accustomed to give is based on the same general principles of relation to the sandstone as that given by Professor Rogers in the Proceedings of the Geological Association. The particular method he has given, I do not think adequate to explain all the varied phenomena which occur. At most, it can only explain a simple, unbroken segment of a line presenting peculiar appearances, (namely, its middle portion inclined and interposed, and its extremities in the form of dikes.) An examination of the details in my Report, I trust will satisfy you that many other modes of arrangement occur, which require a more general principle to explain them.

Allow me to request your attention also to the system of arrangement of the primary rocks of this State which is, too, the result of my own observations, and to the gen-

eral remarks on the distribution of drift (diluvium). I have reluctantly obtruded myself on your attention ; but the introduction of your name in connection with a subject of such interest to me will, I trust, be a sufficient apology.

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

CHARLES LYELL, Esq.

The following story is told concerning the acceptance of his Report. The law contemplating the survey provided that the geologist should receive his remuneration after he had made his Report and it had been approved by the Governor. Percival waited upon Governor Ellsworth with the Report, and was very courteously received. The Governor took the Report, and promised to give it his immediate attention, and when he had examined it, as the law required, would make the necessary requisition, if it were satisfactory. Percival rolled up the Report, and withdrew. He insisted that neither the Governor, nor any one else, was competent to pass upon the merits of his Report, and he would not submit to the indignity. He was desperately in want of the money that the Report would bring him, but he would not take it on such conditions. Some of his friends finally procured the Report from him by an innocent stratagem ; and it received, of course, the formal approbation of the Governor, who admitted his incompetence to revise a geological work of Dr. Percival, but was too good an officer not to yield due obedience to the law. Percival had thus failed to comply with the terms required by the Legislature, and was not, in strict justice, entitled to his pay ; but, said the Governor, alluding to the subject afterwards, in the presence of Professor Fowler,

Story about
the recep-
tion of the
Report.

rubbing his hands together, "We huddled it up, we huddled it up"; and thus ended the most laborious and exacting work which Percival ever undertook.

The Report, when published, made an octavo volume of Its size and character. four hundred and ninety-five pages, accompanied by a geological map of Connecticut. It has been aptly characterized as "a work distinguished for its great learning and research, but which was defective in method and in distinctness of practical application." The American Journal of Science passed upon it the following editorial criticism in the number for January, 1843:—

Criticism of the Journal of Science. "When we remember the learning and talent of the author, and the laborious accuracy with which he investigates every subject which occupies his attention,—that he began this exploration in 1835, and has pursued it with great diligence until the present year,—that he has been personally and on foot in contact with every one of the four thousand six hundred square miles in the State, and has carefully collated and compared more than eight thousand specimens, besides much more numerous dips and bearings,—it cannot be doubted that he has laid the foundation for all future investigations into the geology of Connecticut.

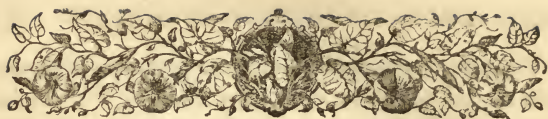
"Dr. Percival tells us, that 'this Report is but a hasty outline'; by this we presume he intends that the full exposition of his theoretical opinions is not given; but we feel assured as to the fulness and accuracy of the facts, and that it will prove a satisfactory solution of a problem of the highest practical as well as scientific importance,—the exact determination of the geological system of the State.*

* We are, however, not a little surprised that he hesitates in express-

“That this Report will meet the expectations of the unscientific but otherwise intelligent bulk of the reading population of the State it would be unreasonable to expect. It is not the object of the book to please, or amuse, nor even to point out new sources of wealth, (though this duty has not been neglected whenever opportunity offered,) and we are not to suppose that the greater portion of the legislative assemblies who have voted grants of money for its completion looked mainly to these secondary ends. But we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have, for all future time, a faithful guide to our explorations, and a standard of comparison at once full and simple. The scientific geologist, who reads Dr. Percival's Report, will only regret that he has not the advantage of the full exposition of the author's theoretical views on many points of interest to science at large, — views which we know the accomplished author possesses, and which, we trust, with the aid of the abundant unused notes and materials at his disposal, he will at some future time make public for the benefit of his fellow-laborers.

“It will ever be gratefully remembered, that we owe the present Report on our geology, as well as that of Professor Shepard on the *mineralogy* of the State, to the enlightened zeal of the Honorable Henry W. Edwards, under whose advice, when in the gubernatorial chair in 1835, the measure was originally proposed, and who has since uniformly sustained it by his official and personal influence.”

ing an opinion as to the age of our secondary. The facts published by others render the determination almost beyond dispute, that our sandstones belong to the *new red* group.



CHAPTER XVIII.

1835 - 1843.

REMINISCENCES OF PROFESSOR SHEPARD. — A LETTER FROM
PROFESSOR DANA.



AM happy to be able to add to the sketch of his labors upon the Geological Survey the graphic reminiscences of his companion in travel and early collaborator, Professor Shepard.

Among my letters is one from Dr. E. D. North, desiring me to furnish any facts within my reach relating to the scientific character and general opinions of the late James G. Percival. This information Dr. North proposed to incorporate into a memoir, to be prefixed to a new edition of Percival's Poems. The biographer, with his task unfinished, has followed the subject of his studies to the tomb.

Dr. North's request revived in me many recollections of Percival; and finally led me to draw out the following sketch of him, as he appeared to my eyes in those days when I saw him often, and sometimes shared his pursuits. Vague and shadowy is the delineation, and to myself seems little better than the reminiscence of a phantom or a dream. Percival's life had few externalities, — he related himself to society by few points of contact; and I have been compelled to paint him chiefly by glimpses of his literary and interior existence.

My acquaintance with him grew out of some conversations on geological topics, and commenced in 1828, when he was working on his translation of Malte-Brun's Geography. The impression made on me by his singular person and manners was vivid and indelible. Slender in form, rather above than under the middle height, he had a narrow chest, and a peculiar stoop, which was not in the back, but high up in the shoulders. His head, without being large, was fine. His eyes were of a dark hazel, and possessed uncommon expression. His nose, mouth, and chin were symmetrically, if not elegantly formed, and came short of beauty only because of that meagreness which marked his whole person. His complexion, light without redness, inclined to sallow, and suggested a temperament somewhat bilious. His dark brown hair had become thin above the forehead, revealing to advantage that most striking feature of his countenance. Taken all together, his appearance was that of a weak man, of delicate constitution, — an appearance hardly justified by the fact; for he endured fatigue and privation with remarkable stanchness.

Percival's face, when he was silent, was full of calm, serious meditation; when speaking, it lighted up with thought, and became noticeably expressive. He commonly talked in a mild, unimpassioned undertone, but just above a whisper, letting his voice sink with rather a pleasing cadence at the completion of each sentence. Even when most animated, he used no gesture except a movement of the first and second fingers of his right hand backward and forward across the palm of the left, meantime following their monotonous unrest with his eyes, and rarely meeting the gaze of his interlocutor. He would stand for hours, when talking, his right elbow on a man-

tel-piece, if there was one near, his fingers going through their strange palmistry; and in this manner, never once stirring from his position, he would not unfrequently protract his discourse till long past midnight. An inexhaustible, undemonstrative, noiseless, passionless man, scarcely evident to you by physical qualities, and impressing you, for the most part, as a creature of pure intellect.

His wardrobe was remarkably inexpensive, consisting of little more than a single plain suit, brown His dress. or gray, which he wore winter and summer, until it became threadbare. He never used boots; and his shoes, though carefully dusted, were never blacked. A most unpretending bow fastened his cravat of colored cambric. For many years his only outer garment was a brown camlet cloak, of very scanty proportions, thinly lined, and a meagre protection against winter. His hat was worn for years before being laid aside, and put you in mind of the prevailing mode by the law of contrast only. He was never seen with gloves, and rarely with an umbrella. The value of his entire wardrobe scarcely exceeded fifty dollars; yet he was always neat, and appeared unconscious of any peculiarity in his costume.

An accurate portrait of him at any period of his life His portrait. can scarcely be said to exist. His sensitive modesty seems to have made him unwilling to let his features be exposed to the flaring notoriety of canvas. Once, indeed, he allowed himself to be painted by Mr. George A. Flagg; but the picture having been exhibited in the Trumbull Gallery of Yale College, Percival's susceptibility took alarm, and he expressed annoyance, — though whether dissatisfied with the portrait or its public exposure I cannot say. The artist proposed certain alterations, and the poet listened to him with seeming assent.

The picture was taken back to the studio ; objectionable or questionable parts of it painted out ; the likeness destroyed for the purpose of correction ; and Percival was to give another sitting at his convenience. That was the last time he put himself within painting reach of Mr. Flagg's easel.*

In those days of our early acquaintance, he occupied two small chambers, one of which fronted on the business part of Chapel Street (New Haven). ^{His home.}

His books, already numerous, were piled in double tiers and in heaps against the walls, covering the floors also, and barely leaving space for his sleeping-cot, chair, and writing-table. His library was a *sanctum* to which the curious visitor hardly ever gained admittance. He met even his friends at the door, and generally held his interviews with them in the adjoining passage. Disinclined to borrow books, he was especially averse to lending. Dr. Guhrauer's assertion respecting Leibnitz, that "his library was numerous and valuable, and its possessor had the peculiarity that he liked to worm in it alone, being very reluctant to let any one see it," applies equally well to Percival.

He was rarely visible abroad except in his walks to

* I remember to have seen an excellent portrait of him, by Francis Alexander, in the studio of that artist, in the year 1825 ; but in whose possession it now is I am unable to say. [It belongs to the heirs of the late Dr. George Hayward. In a letter to me, Mr. Lyman C. Draper, of Madison, Wisconsin, remarks concerning Mr. Flagg's portrait: "We have in the Gallery of our State Historical Society an original portrait of Percival, painted by Mr. Flagg of New Haven, about 1831, which we obtained by purchase since Percival's death. It looks to me very much in expression like the engraving prefixed to the edition of his poems." There is another portrait now in possession of the Young Men's Christian Association, of Troy, N. Y., painted about 1823 by Professor S. F. B. Morse, which has a more youthful expression than Alexander's.]

and from the country, whither he often resorted to pass not hours only, but frequently entire days, in solitary wanderings, — partly for physical exercise, — still more, perhaps, to study the botany, the geology, and the

Rambles.

minutest geographical features of the environs ; for his restless mind was perpetually observant, and could not be withheld from external nature, even by his poetic and philosophic meditation. In these excursions, he often passed his fellow-mortals without noticing them. A friend, if observed, he greeted with a slight nod, and possibly stopped him for conversation. Once started on a subject, Percival rarely quitted it until it was exhausted ; and consequently these interviews sometimes outlasted the leisure of his listener. You excused yourself, perhaps ; or you were called away by some one else ; but you had only put off the conclusion of the discourse, not escaped it. The next time Percival encountered you, his first words were, “As I was saying,” — and taking up the thread of his observations where it had been broken, he went straight to the end.

The excellent bookstore of the late Hezekiah Howe, one of the best in New England, and particularly rich in those rare and costly works which form a book-worm’s delight, was one of Percival’s best-loved lounging-places. He bought freely, and, when he could not buy, he was welcome to peruse. He read with marvellous rapidity, skipping as if by instinct everything that was unimportant ; avoiding the rhetoric, the common-places, the falsities ; glancing only at what was new, what was true, what was suggestive. He had a distinct object in view ; but it was not to amuse himself, nor to compare author with author ; it was simply to increase the sum of his own knowledge. Perhaps it was in these rapid fo-

Literary
resort.

rays through unbought, uncut volumes, that he acquired his singular habit of reading books, even his own, without subjecting them to the paper-knife. People who wanted to see Percival and obtain his views on special topics were accustomed to look for him at General Howe's, and always found him willing to pour forth his voluminous information.

His income at this time was derived solely from literary jobs, and was understood to be very limited. What he earned he spent chiefly for ^{Income.} books, particularly for such as would assist him in perfecting that striking monument of his varied and profound research, his new translation and edition of Malte-Brun. For this labor the time had been estimated, and the publishers had made him an allowance, which, if he had worked like other men, would have amounted to eight dollars a day. But Percival would let nothing go out of his hands imperfect; a typographical error, even, I have heard him say, sometimes depressed him like actual illness. He translated and revised so carefully, he corrected so many errors and added so many foot-notes, that his industry actually devoured his own wages; and his eight dollars gradually diminished to a diurnal fifty cents.

Percival made no merely ceremonial calls, few friendly visits, and attended no parties. If he dropped in upon a family of his acquaintance, he rarely addressed himself to a lady. Otherwise there was nothing peculiar in his deportment; for, if silent, he was not embarrassed,—and if he talked, it was without any appearance of self-consciousness.

Judging from his isolated habits, some persons supposed him misanthropic. Let me give one instance of his good-nature. One of the elder professors of Yale

had fallen into a temporary misappreciation with the students, who received his instructions, to say the least, with an ill-concealed indifference. They whispered during his lectures, and in other ways rendered themselves strenuously disagreeable to the sensitive nerves of the professor. Indignant at such behavior toward a worthy and learned man, who had been his own instructor, Percival proposed a plan for stopping the annoyance. It was, that a number of old graduates, professors, and others, himself being one, should attend the lectures, listen to them with the respect they merited, and so, if possible, bring the students to a sense of propriety and of the advantages they were neglecting.

No, Percival was not a misanthrope. During an acquaintance of twenty-five years, I never knew Not a misanthrope. him do an act or utter a word which could countenance this opinion. He indulged in no bitter remarks, cherished no hatred of individuals, affected no scorn of his race; on the contrary, he held large views concerning the noble destinies of mankind, and expressed deep interest in its advancement toward greater intelligence and virtue. The local affections he certainly had, for he was gratified at the prosperity of his fellow-townsmen, proud of his native State, and took a pleasure in defending her name from unjust aspersions. Patriotic, too,—none more so,—he rejoiced in the welfare of the whole country, knew its history thoroughly, and bestowed on its military heroes, in particular, a lively appreciation, which was singular, perhaps, in a man of such gentle habits and nature. I cannot forget the excited pleasure with which we visited, when on the geological survey of Connecticut, Putnam's Stairs at Horseneck, and Putnam's Wolf-Den in Pomfret. At the latter place, Percival's

enthusiasm for the heroic hunter and warrior led him to carve his initials on a rock at the entrance of the chasm. It was the only place during the tour where he left a similar memorial.

American statesmen he admired scarcely less than American soldiers; nor did he neglect any information within his reach concerning public men ^{Or a partisan.} and measures. It was singular to observe with what freedom from excitement he discussed the most irritating phases of party, — speaking of the men and events of his own day with as much philosophic calmness as if they belonged to a previous century; not at all deceived, I think, by the temporary notoriety and power which frequently attend the political bustler, — quite positive, indeed, that many of our “great men” were far inferior to multitudes in private life. Webster he respected greatly, and used to regret that his fortune was not commensurate with his tastes. Like a true poet, he believed devoutly in native genius, considered it something inimitable and incommunicable, and worshipped it wherever he found it.

Percival was indifferent and even disinclined to female society. He never, in my hearing, said a hard ^{Female society.} thing of any woman, or of the sex; and I remember distinctly the flattering and even poetic appreciation with which he spoke of individual ladies. Of one who has since become a distinguished authoress of the South, he said, that “her conversation had as great an intellectual charm for him as that of any scholar among his male acquaintances.” Of a lady still resident in New Haven he observed, that “there was a mysterious beauty in her thoughtful face and dark eyes which reminded him of a deep and limpid forest fountain.” But although he did not hate women, he certainly was disinclined to their so-

ciety, — an oddity, I beg leave to say, in any man, and a most surprising eccentricity in a poet. Constitutional timidity may have founded this habit during youth ; for, as I have already observed, his modesty was sensitive and almost morbid. Then came his multitudinous studies, which absorbed him utterly, and in which, unfortunately for Percival, if not for the ladies, these last took so little interest that conversation was not mutually desirable. A remark he made to a scientific friend, who had just been married, will, perhaps, throw some light on the subject. “How is this?” said he; “I thought you were wedded to science.” This was all the felicitation he had to offer; and without asking for the bride, he plunged into the discussion which was the object of the visit.

In 1835 commenced the Geological Survey of Connecticut, and I became Percival's companion in labor. To him was intrusted the geology proper, and to myself the mineralogy and its economical applications. During the first season, we prosecuted our investigations together, travelling in a one-horse wagon, which carried all our necessary implements, and visiting, before the campaign ended, every parish in the State. Great was the wonder our strange outfit and occupation excited in some rustic neighborhoods; and very often were we called upon to enlighten the popular mind with regard to our object and its uses. This was never a pleasant task to Percival. He did not relish long confabulations with a sovereign people somewhat ignorant of geology; and, moreover, his style of describing our business was so peculiar, that it rarely failed to transfer the curiosity to himself, and lead to tiresome delays. In New Milford, an inquisitive farmer requested us, in a somewhat ungracious manner, to give an account of ourselves. Percival

replied, that we were acting under a commission from the Governor to ascertain the useful minerals of the State; whereupon our utilitarian friend immediately demanded to be informed how the citizens at large, including himself, were to be benefited by the undertaking, — putting question on question in a fashion which was most pertinacious and almost impertinent. Percival became impatient, and tried to hurry away. “I demand the information,” exclaimed the New-Milfordite; “I demand it as my right. You are only servants of the people; and you are paid, in part at least, out of my pocket.” “I’ll tell you what we’ll do,” said Percival; “we can’t stop, but we’ll refund. Your portion of the geological tax, — let me see, — it must be about two cents. We prefer handing you this to encountering a further delay.” Our agricultural friend and master did not take the money, although he did the hint, and in sulky silence withdrew from our company.

Driving through the town of Warren, we stopped a farmer to inquire the way to certain places in the vicinity. He gave us the information ^{Reminis-}_{cences.} sought, staring at us meanwhile with a benevolently inquisitive expression, and, at last, volunteering the remark, that if we wanted a job, we had better stop at the factory in the hollow. We thanked him for his goodness, and thought, perhaps, of Sedgwick geologizing by the roadside, and getting a charitable half-crown flung at him by a noble lady who was on her way to dine in his company at the house of a mutual acquaintance.

Let us grant here one brief parenthesis of respect and astonishment to the scientific knowledge and philological acumen of a distinguished graduate of Yale College, and member of Congress, whom we encountered on our trav-

els. Hearing us speak of mosaic granite, a rock occurring in Woodbridge, to which we had given the name, from the checker-like arrangement of its felspathic ingredient, he concluded that we attributed its formation to the era of Moses, and asked Percival what evidence he had for such an opinion. Small blame to him, perhaps, for the blunder, but it seemed a very droll one to geologists.

In Greenwich, the extreme southwestern town of the State, we encountered an incident to which my companion would sometimes refer with a slight degree of merriment. In general, he was no joker, no anecdotist, and had but a feeble appreciation of droll sayings or humorous matters of any kind. But in Greenwich he heard a memorable phrase. Among the tavern-loungers was a man who had evidently seen better days, and who, either for that reason or because of the large amount of rum he had swallowed, entertained a lofty opinion of himself, and discoursed *de omnibus rebus* in a most consequential fashion. He soon made himself a sort of medium between ourselves and his fellow-loafers. Overhearing us say that we wished to pass the New York frontier for the sake of tracing out the strata then under examination, he proceeded with much pomposity to declare to his deeply curious auditory, that "it was his opinion that the Governor of the State should confer upon these gentlemen *discretionary powers* to pass the limits of Connecticut, whenever and wherever, in the prosecution of their labors, the interests of science required them so to do." After this, we rarely crossed the State line but Percival observed, "We are now taking advantage of our discretionary powers."

Of the few stories Percival told me, here is one. In

One of his stories. one of our country places, a plain, shrewd townsman fell into chance conversation with him, and

entertained him with some account of a neighbor who had been seized with a mania for high art, and had let loose his frenzy upon canvas in a deluge of oil-colors. If I mistake not, Percival was invited to inspect these productions of untaught and perhaps unteachable genius. They were vast attempts at historical scenes, in which the heads and legs of heroes were visible, but played a very secondary part in the interest, compared with a perfect tempest of drapery, which rolled in ungovernable masses, like the clouds of a thunder-storm.

“What do you think of them?” inquired Percival.

“Well, I don’t claim to be a judge of such things,” replied his cicerone; “but the fact is, (and I told the painter so,) that, when I look at ’em, about the only thing I can think of is a resurrection of old clothes.”

In the town of Lebanon, an incident occurred which affected us rather more seriously. Turning a corner suddenly, we came upon an old man digging up cobble-stones by the roadside and breaking them in pieces with an axe. “A brother geologist,” was our first impression. At that moment the old man sprang towards us, the axe in one hand and half a brick in the other, shouting eagerly, —

“I guess Mr. ——” (name indistinguishable) “will be glad to see you, gentlemen.”

“For what?”

“Why, he has got several boxes of jewels; and I gave an advertisement in the paper.”

“Whose are they?”

“King Jerome’s.”

“And who is he?”

“The king of the world!” shouted the maniac, still advancing with a menacing air, and so near the wagon by this time that he might almost have hit Percival with his

axe. Without pausing to hear more about the jewels, a sudden blow to the horse barely enabled us to escape the reach of our fellow-laborer before he had time to use his axe on our own formations.

In the following year, when Percival was pursuing the survey by himself, on horseback, some of the elements of this adventure were repeated, but reversed after a very odd fashion. The late Dr. Carrington of Farmington, who told me the tale, being ten miles from home
A mistake. on a professional excursion, drove up to a tavern and found himself welcomed with extraordinary emphasis by the innkeeper. The Doctor was just the person he wanted to see; the Doctor's opinion was very much needed about that strange man out there; he wished the Doctor to have a talk with him, and see whether he was crazy or not. The fellow had been there a day or two, picking up stones about the lots; and some of the boys had been sent to watch him, but could get nothing out of him. This morning he wanted to go away, and ordered his horse; but the neighbors wouldn't let it be brought up, for they said he was surely some mad chap who had taken another man's horse. Thus talking, the landlord pointed out Percival, surrounded by a group of villagers, who, quietly, and under pretence of conversation, were holding him under a sort of arrest. The Doctor rushed into the circle, addressed his friend Percival by name, spoke of the Survey, and thus satisfied the bystanders, who, guessing their mistake, dispersed silently. No open remonstrance was needed, and perhaps Percival never understood the adventure in which he thus unconsciously formed the principal character.

While we were in Berlin, the native town of Percival, he related to me several incidents of his earlier life. His

father was discussing some geographical question with a neighbor; and the future geologist, then a boy of seven or eight, sat by listening until the ^{His earlier} life. ignorance of his elders tempted him to speak. "Where did you learn that?" they asked, in astonishment. With timid reluctance, he confessed that he had been reading clandestinely Morse's large geography, of which there was a copy in a society library kept near his own home. The book, he added, had an indescribable attraction for him; and even at that almost infantile age he was familiar with its contents. It was this reading of Morse, perhaps, which determined his taste for those geographical studies in which he subsequently became so distinguished. With him, as with Humboldt and Guyot, geography was a term of wide signification. Far from confining it to the names and boundaries of countries, seas, and lakes, to the courses of rivers and the altitudes of mountains, he connected with it meteorology, natural history, and the leading facts of human history, ethnology, and archæology. He knew London as thoroughly as most Americans know New York or Philadelphia, and yet he had never crossed the Atlantic.

An instance of the minuteness of his geographical information was related to me by the Rev. Mr. Adam, a Scottish clergyman, long resident at Benares, but subsequently settled over the Congregational Church in Amherst, Massachusetts. On his way to visit me at New Haven, he met in the stage-coach a countryman of his, who soon opened a controversy with him respecting the course of a certain river in Scotland. The discussion had continued for some time, when another passenger offered a suggestion which opened the eyes of the debaters to the fact (not unfrequently the case in such

controversies) that they were both wrong. "How long since you were there, sir?" they asked; and the reply was, "I never was in Scotland." "Who are you, sir?" Mr. Adam wanted to ask, but kept the question until he could put it to me. I did not feel much hesitation in telling him that the stranger must have been Percival; and Percival it was, as I afterwards learned by questioning him of the circumstance.

But we must return to Berlin, in order to hear one more of Percival's stories. Passing a field, half a mile from his early home, he told an incident connected with it, and related to his favorite study of Natural History. The field had belonged to his father, who, besides being the physician of Berlin, indulged a taste for agriculture. Just before the harvest season, it became palpable that this field, then waving with wheat, was depredated upon to a wasteful extent by some unknown subjects of the animal kingdom. Having watched for the pilferers in vain by day, the proprietor resolved to mount guard by night, and accordingly ambushed himself in the invaded territory. Near midnight, he saw his own flock of geese, hitherto considered so trustworthy, approach silently in single file, make their entry between the rails, and commence transferring the wheat-crop into their own crops, after a ravenous fashion. Having eaten their fill, they re-formed their column of march, with a venerable gander at the head, and trudged silently homeward, cautiously followed by their owner, who noticed, that, on regaining his door-yard, they set up a vociferous cackle, such as he had repeatedly heard from them before at about the same hour. It was a most evident attempt to establish an *alibi*; it was as much as to say, "If you miss any wheat, we did n't take it; we are honest birds,

Another
story.

and stay at home o' nights, Dr. Percival." The next morning, however, a general decapitation overtook the flock of feathered hypocrites. "It was a curious instance of the domestic goose reverting to its wild habit of nocturnal feeding," remarked my narrator, dwelling characteristically upon the natural-history aspect of the fact.

Percival was almost incapable of an irrelevancy. The Survey was the business in hand, and he rarely discoursed much of things disconnected with it, except, perhaps, when we were retracing our routes, or when the labors of the day were over. Of poets and poetry he was not inclined to speak. I never heard him quote a line, either his own or another's, nor indulge in a single poetic observation concerning the objects which met us in our wanderings. Indeed, he confessed that he no longer felt disposed to write verses, being satisfied that his productions were not acceptable to the prevailing taste; although he admitted that he composed a few stanzas occasionally, in order to make trial of some unusual measure or new language. He told me that he had versified in thirteen languages; and I have heard from others that he had imitated all the Greek and German metres.

Of politics, foreign and domestic, he talked frequently, but always philosophically and dispassionately, much as if he were speaking of geological stratification. His views of humanity were deduced from a most extensive survey of the race in all its historical ^{His views of} humanity. and geographical relations. He distinctly recognized the fact of its steady advance from one stage to another, in accordance with a plan of intellectually organic development, as marked as that detected by the geologist in the gradual preparation of the earth for the abode of our species. The slowness and seeming vacillation of man's

upward movement could not stagger his faith ; for it had taken thousands of ages to make earth habitable, why should it not take thousands more to bring man to his completeness? Equally free was he from misgiving on account of the remaining presence of so much misery and wretchedness ; for these he considered as the indispensable *stimuli* to progress. Even war, he used to say, is sometimes necessary to the welfare of nations, as sickness and sorrow plainly are to that of individuals ; although, to his moral sense, the human authors of this scourge were no more admirable than the devisers of any private calamity. Improvements in knowledge he regarded as the only elements of real progress ; and these he looked upon as true germinal principles, bound up organically in the constitution of the human soul. Indeed, that philosophical calmness which was characteristic of him seemed to flow in some measure from his settled persuasion that the same matchless wisdom and benevolence he recognized throughout nature wrought with a still higher providence and a more earnest love for man, and would make all things finally conduce to his welfare. It was clear that he drew a profound tranquillity from the thought that he was a part of the vast and harmonious whole.

Concerning his religious views he was exceedingly taciturn. He had no taste for metaphysical or theological discussions, although his library contained a large number of standard works on these subjects. Religion itself he never alluded to but with the deepest respect. Talking to me of Christianity, he quoted the observation of Goethe, that "it had brought into the world a light never to be extinguished." He spoke of Jesus with poetic, if not with Christian fervor. He contrasted his teachings and deeds with the prevailing

His religious
views.

maxims and practice of the people among whom he appeared, with the dead orthodoxy of its religious teachers, and with the general ignorance and hypocrisy of the masses. "Had I lived in such a state of society," he said, "I am certain that it would have driven me mad." He expressed an earnest esteem for the doctrines of the Evangelical clergy, and even approved, though more moderately, the religious awakenings which occur under their labors. He described to me, with some particularity, a revival he had witnessed in his native town, when young; and repeated some of the quaint exhortations of the lay brethren, all in a manner perfectly serious, but calculated, perhaps, to leave the impression that such views of religion were not necessary to himself, although they might be quite suited to the minds of others. The rational theology he regarded as anti-poetic in influence, and of very doubtful efficacy in working upon the masses. He appreciated, however, the honesty and superior culture of the Unitarian scholars and clergy of Boston, with many of whom he had been on terms as intimate as his shyness accorded to any one. He attended church but once with me while we were engaged in the survey. We heard a discourse from the Rev. Dr. E——, Attends church and criticises the sermon. upon the conduct of the young ruler who inquired his duty of Christ. The speaker argued from the sacred narrative a universal obligation to devote our possessions to religious purposes, and upheld, as an example to all men, the self-devotion of a young missionary (then somewhat known) who had despised a splendid fortune, offered him on condition of his remaining at home, and had consecrated himself to the Christianization of Africa.

"How did you like the sermon?" I inquired of Percival.

"I consider it an animating and probably useful per-

formance," he replied ; " but it does not accord with comprehensive conceptions of humanity, inasmuch as its main inference was drawn from the exception, and not from the rule. There always have been, and probably always will be, men possessed of the self-immolating or martyr spirit. Such instances are undoubtedly useful, and have my admiration ; but they cannot become general, and never were meant to be."

During the Survey, we were invited to pass an evening in a family remarkable for its musical talent, and I remember distinctly the evident pleasure with which Percival listened to the chorus of organ tones and rich, cultivated voices. In general, however, his appreciation of music was subordinate to his study of syllabic movement in versification ; and it was with reference chiefly to poetic measure, I have been told, that he acquired what mastery he had over the accordion and guitar.

Percival's favorite topics, when evening came and we rested from our stony labors, were the modern
His favorite topics. languages and the philosophy of universal grammar. They seemed to have filled the niches in his heart from which he had banished, or tried to banish, the Muses. The subtle refinements of Bopp were a perpetual luxury to him ; he derived language from language as easily as word from word ; and, once started in the intricacies of the Russian or the Basque, there was no predicting the end of the discourse. Thus were thrown away, upon a solitary listener, midnight lectures which would have done honor to the class-rooms of Berlin or the Sorbonne. In looking at such an instance of intellectual pleasure and acumen, as connected in no small degree with the study of foreign languages, one cannot avoid associating together the unsolved mystery of that discrep-

any of tongues prevailing in different countries with the disagreeing *floras* and *faunas* of the same regions, — each diversity bearing alike the unmistakable marks of Omnipotent design for the happiness and improvement of man.

The perfection of his memory was amazing. During the year following the Survey, when we had frequent occasion to compare recollections, I observed that no circumstance of our labors was shadowy or incomplete in his memory. ^{His memory.} He could refer to every trifling incident of the tour, recall every road and path that we had followed, every field and ledge that we had examined, particularize the day of the week on which we had dined or supped at such a tavern, and mention the name of the landlord. I asked him how he was able to remember such minutiae. He replied, that it was his custom, on going to bed, to call up, in the darkness and stillness, all the incidents of the day's experience, in their proper order, and cause them to move before him like a diorama through a spiritual morning, noon, and evening. "It has often appeared to me," he said, "that in this purely mental process I see objects more distinctly than I behold them in the reality." But his memory doubtless gained an immense additional advantage from his habitual seclusion, from his unconcern with the distracting customs of society, and, most of all, from the imperturbable abstraction under which he studied and observed. With him there was no blending of collateral subjects, no permitted intrusion of things irrelevant or trivial, so that the channels of his thoughts were always single, deep, and traceable. It was a mental straightforwardness and conscientiousness, as rare, perhaps, as moral rectitude itself.

In diet, Percival was the most abstemious person I ever knew. His health was uniformly good, —
His diet. the specimens of a geologist, when he collects them himself, being as favorable to digestion and appetite as the pebbles to a chicken ; yet, I am persuaded, my companion in no case violated the golden rule of leaving the table unsated. No matter how long had been his fast, he showed no impatience at hunger, made no remark upon the excellence of any dish, found fault with nothing, or, at most, only seemed to miss drinkable coffee and good bread, articles seldom to be met with in the country. He ate slowly, selecting his food with the discrimination which ought to belong to a chemist or physiologist, and then thought no more about it. Alcoholic drinks he never tasted, except an occasional glass of wine, to which his attention perhaps had been called on account of its age or superior excellence. Even then it was not the flavor which interested him, so much as the history, geographical and other. Peculiar as he was in his own habits of diet,
Not critical toward others. he offered no strictures upon the practice of others, however different, unless it ran into hurtful excesses. The maxim of Epictetus in the "Enchiridion," — "Never preach how others ought to eat, but eat you as becomes you," — seemed to be his rule. Indeed, Percival was one of those rare men who withhold alike censure and praise respecting the minor matters of life. Not that he was without opinions on such subjects ; but, to obtain them, one was forced to question him. On the whole, I do not think it would be going too far to apply to him the above-named moralist's description of the wise man : "He reproves nobody, praises nobody, blames nobody, nor even speaks of himself ; if any one praises him, in his own mind he contemns the flatterer ; if any one reproves him,

he looks with care that he be not unsettled in the state of tranquillity that he has entered into. All his desires depend on things within his power; he transfers all his aversions to those things which nature commands us to avoid. His appetites are always moderate. He is indifferent whether he be thought foolish or ignorant. He observes himself with the nicety of an enemy or a spy, and looks on his own wishes as betrayers."

Percival's solitary habits, combined with the invariable seriousness of his manner, led many persons to believe him melancholy and even disposed to suicide. He once confessed to me, that he sometimes felt giddy on the edge of a precipice. While we were examining the great iron furnaces of Salisbury, he told me that he was afraid of walking near the throat of a chimney when in blast, and that more than once he had turned and run from the lurid, murky orifice, lest a sudden failure of self-control should cause him to reel into the consuming abyss. No,—Percival neither felt nor expressed disgust with life. On the contrary, he was strongly attached to it; the acquisition of knowledge clothed it with inexpressible value; the longest day was ever too short to fulfil his designs. Like the wise, laborious men of all ages, he almost repined at the swiftness of the years. "I am amazed at the flight of time," he said to me on the arrival of his forty-second birthday; "it seems only a year since I was thirty-two;—I have lost ten years of my life."

Before entering upon the survey of Connecticut, he was not specially devoted to any one branch of physics, although his tastes inclined him most toward geology. While he could sympathize perfectly, he said, with those who threw their whole force into a single

His solitary habits.

Not a one-sided scholar.

study, he felt himself attracted equally by the entire circle of nature, and thought omniscience a nobler object of ambition than any one science. He admitted that the search after all knowledge is incompatible with eminence in any particular department; but he believed that it affords higher pleasure to the mind, and confers ability to do signal service to mankind in pointing out the grand connections, the general laws, of nature.

It is not, perhaps, widely known that Percival was a well-informed botanist. He studied this branch
A botanist. when a medical student under Professor Ives, and assisted his instructor in laying out a small botanical garden, the plants of which were arranged after the natural orders of Jussieu. Soon after finishing his medical education, he gave a course of lectures on botany in Charleston, South Carolina, before a very select audience, composed mostly of ladies. The only drawback to the lecturer's success was his excessive timidity. As an evidence of the assiduity with which he botanized, it may be mentioned that he had seen the *Geranium Robertianum* (a plant which nestles in the sunny clefts of our trap mountains) in bloom during every month of the year. One year he found its blossoms in December, another in January, and so on, until the round of the monthly calendar was completed.

Percival was an earnest advocate of popular education.
An advocate of popular education. He manifested much interest in the first systematic attempt (at the instance of Mr. James Brewster) to furnish the people of New Haven with popular instruction in the form of lectures. At a public dinner, given by Mr. Brewster, on the occasion of opening the building in which rooms had been fitted up for these lectures, the late Mr. Skinner gave the toast, "Our

mechanics, the right arm of New Haven," and Percival followed with, "Science, the right eye which directs the right arm of New Haven." He believed most fully in the superiority of intelligent labor. He pointed out cases in which a college-training had been connected with signal eminence in mechanical invention, and said, that, according to his observations, persons engaged in industrial pursuits usually succeeded in proportion to the thoroughness of their education.

Percival himself gave a course of lectures, or rather, lessons, in New Haven, not in the building Lectures on the German language. above mentioned, for his natural timidity was too great to encounter a public audience, but in the theological lecture-room of Yale College. They were on the German language, and consisted chiefly of translations of prose and poetry into English, intermingled with philosophical commentaries on the peculiarities of the original. It was pure grammar; he did not talk German, and claimed no acquaintance with the niceties of pronunciation; but all his listeners, most of whom were graduates, were struck with his perfect mastery of the subject.

Percival held one peculiar opinion concerning a branch of college education. He objected to An opinion on college education. the modern practice of teaching the natural sciences by means of a profusion of drawings, models, showy experiments, and other expedients addressing the mind so strongly through the eye. While these might be allowable in popular lectures, before audiences lacking in early intellectual discipline, where amusement was a consideration, and where without it the public ear could not be secured, he thought that the collegian should study differently, — that his understanding should be taxed severely, and that he should be inured, from the first, to

rigid attention, in order to a lasting remembrance of the truths offered to him. It would be a useful exercise for the instructor, he thought, to elucidate obscure phenomena and complicated structures by words only, assisting himself, perhaps, occasionally, by extemporaneous drawings. Such a course would inspire the scholar with deference for his teacher, and confidence in his own ability to acquire a similar grasp of the subject. While there is certainly some truth in this opinion, it would not be difficult, perhaps, to invalidate its general force. Why should the ear be the only admitted means of acquiring knowledge? Nature, the greatest of teachers, does not judge thus: she conveys half her wisdom to us by sight, instead of by faith; she gives her first lessons to the infant through the eye. Would Percival, in looking for his attentive audiences, have preferred a congregation of blind men?

Speaking of literary composition, he said that he often His habits of literary composition. took great pains with his productions, shifting words and phrases in many ways, before satisfying himself that he had attained the best form of expression; and he assured me that these slowly elaborated passages were the very ones in which he afterwards recognized the most ease and nature, and which others supposed him to have thrown off carelessly. I asked him how it was that children, in their unpremeditated way, expressed themselves with so much directness and beauty. They have but a single idea to present at a time, he said; they seize without hesitation on the first words that offer for its expression, unperplexed by any such choice of terms as would surely occur to maturer minds; and most important of all, perhaps, they are wholly unembarrassed by limiting qualifications arising from a fuller knowledge of the subject.

His prose style is a rare exemplification of classic severity and perspicuousness. In each paragraph the ideas arrange themselves in faultless connection, like the molecules of a crystal around its centre. The sentences are not long, the construction is simple, the words are English in its purity, without admixture of foreign phrase or idiom. But the most striking peculiarity of his diction is the utter absence of ornament; for Percival evidently held that the chief merits of composition are clearness and directness. Poetic imagery, brilliant climaxes and antitheses, fanciful or grotesque turns of expression, he rejected as unfavorable to that simple truth for which he studied and wrote. This dry, almost mathematical style, was no necessity with him; few men, surely, have had at command a richer vocabulary, English and foreign, than Percival; few could have adorned thought with more or choicer garlands from the fields of knowledge and imagination.

To letter-writing he had a great aversion. I have never seen a letter or note from him to which ^{His hand-}his signature was attached. The autograph-^{writing.} fanciers, therefore, will find a scanty harvest when they come to forage after the name of Percival. His handwriting corresponded in some sense with his character. It was fine; the lines straight and parallel; the letters completely formed, though without fulness of curve; no flourishes, and no unnecessary prolongations of stroke, above or below the general run of the line. There were few erasures, the punctuation was perfect, and the manuscript was fit for the press as it left his hand.*

* This cannot be said of all his writings, since there are many poems and much manuscript besides which can never be read because it was written in such a running, up-and-down, illegible hand.

Literary criticism. Literary criticism he rarely indulged in, being too disinclined to praise or blame, and too intensely devoted to the acquisition of positive knowledge. If he commented severely upon anything, it was usually the slovenly diction of some of our State surveys, or the inaccuracies of translations from foreign languages.

His only published criticism, of which I am aware, was discharged at a phrenological lecturer, whose extraordinary assumptions and *ad-captandum* style had excited his disgust. Percival did not reverence the science of bumps, and believed, in the words of William von Humboldt, that "it is one of those discoveries which, when stripped of all the *charlatanerie* that surrounds them, will show but a very meagre portion of truth." Dr. Barber, an Englishman, and a somewhat noted teacher of elocution, having been converted to the phrenological faith, delivered certain magniloquent lectures on the same to the citizens of New Haven, and took pay therefor, after the manner of his sect. Percival responded with a sharp newspaper pasquinade, entitled "Lecture Extraordinary on Nosology." The following is the article, reprinted entire from the Daily Herald of August 17, 1833.

"LECTURE EXTRAORDINARY ON NOSOLOGY.

"*Tickets not Transferable!*"

"Gentlemen! the nose is the most prominent feature in this bill.

‘Ο Νοῦς κατ’ ἀληθῆς φρένες.

‘The nose is the true seat of mind.’

And, therefore, gentlemen, nosology, or the science of the nose, is the true phrenology.

"He who *knows* his *nose foreknows*; for he *knows* that which is *before* him. Therefore nosology is the surest guide to conduct.

"Whatever progress an individual may make, his *nose* is always in advance. But society is only a congeries of individuals, — consequently its nose is always in advance, therefore its proper guide.

"The nose, rightly understood, will most assuredly work wonders in the cause of improvement; for it is always going ahead, always first in every undertaking, always soonest at the goal.

"The ancients did not neglect the nose. Look at their busts and statues! What magnification and abduction in Jove! What insinuation and elongation in the Apollo (*ἑκηβόλος*)! Then nous (intellect) was surely the nose; gnosis (knowledge), noses; and Minos, my nose. Well might the great judge, when regarding this most prominent member of his judgment-seat, exclaim, — 'My nose! *Ecce Homo!*'

"Gentlemen! here is a bad nose, — a very bad nose. What intussusception, what potation, and, as a necessary consequence, alas! what rubification! But I have seen such noses, ah! yes, many such noses! Beware of them! They are bad noses, — very bad noses, I assure you!

"Gentlemen! when you choose your partners for life, look out for the nose. Beware of too great penetration and Romanotion, if you would not be henpecked by the one or butted by the other. O yes, — look out for the nose.

"Do not, I pray you, consider me by any means irreverent, if I say that nosology will prove highly favorable to the cause of religion. This is indeed an awful subject, and I would not touch it on slight grounds; but I sincerely believe that what I say is true, — nosology will prove

highly favorable to the cause of religion! Does not the nose stand forth like a watchman on the walls of Zion, on the lookout for all assailants; and when our faces are directed upwards in devotion, does not the nose ascend the highest, and most especially tend heavenwards?

"Nosology, too, has a very important bearing on the *great law of descent*; that law, which, like the lever of Archimedes, will lift the world. Is not the nose the chief seat of all defluxions, and what are defluxions but a *flowing down* by the great law of descent? Who shall gainsay it?

"This system of nosology was first concocted by Dr. Schnorr; then perfected by Dr. Schnieser; and is now being retailed by your humble servant at command, Dr. Schaefer, — all from the promontory of noses; all genuine descendants of the Man with the Nose.

"But, mark me, gentlemen! nosology is being retailed *free gratis*. The citizens of New Haven need not therefore fear, that some eight or nine hundred dollars will thereby escape from their pockets within a few weeks. Dr. Schaefer does not *shave*, whatever his name would seem to indicate.

"Nosology is a manly science. It stands out in the open light. It does not conceal itself behind scratches and periwigs; nor does it, like certain false teachers, mentioned by St. Paul, go about from house to house, leading astray *silly women*.

"Finally, gentlemen! you may rest assured that nosology will not quietly submit to insult. *Noli me tangere!* Who ever endured a tweak of the nose? It will know how to take vengeance. As Jupiter metamorphosed the inhospitable Lycians into *frogs*, so its contemners will suddenly find themselves βαρβαρόφωνοι!

"Gentlemen, permit me to exhibit to you a nosological table, in which all the organs are exactly localized. Such' of you as are desirous of a copy will be furnished by your humble servant on the most reasonable terms; and I would advise you all to procure a copy, especially for *my* advantage.

A nosological table.

"NOSOLOGICAL TABLE.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Penetration. | 14. Consolidation. |
| 2. Intussusception. | 15. Romanotion. |
| 3. Abduction. | 16. Magnification. |
| 4. Alimentation. | 17. Insinuation. |
| 5. Contemplation. | 18. Angulation. |
| 6. Inhalation. | 19. Nullification. |
| 7. Potation. | 20. Revision. |
| 8. Elongation. | 21. Secession. |
| 9. Interpunction. | 22. Mystification. |
| 10. Compunction. | 23. Obtenebration. |
| 11. Function. | 24. Substantiation. |
| 12. Mediation. | 25. Rubification |
| 13. Coalition. | (accidental organ)." * |



* This is a satirical sally in another vein.

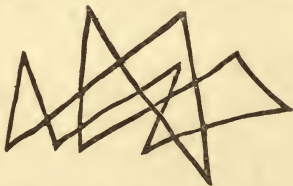
"John Neal is edifying the public, in his Yankee, with his usual free-and-easy remarks on all our literary characters, and that, too, without seeming to care where or how he hits. We believe Neal has talents, but not enough to authorize him to assume such a dictatorship over authors. He has no genius, or if he has, it has run wild without curb or rein. Genius should be capable of continued and lofty enthusiasm. It should fix upon the sun, and soar to it by one long and steady flight. It



should imitate the strong-eyed eagle. Neal may be an eagle, but he

Percival has been thought over-tenacious of his opinions. He was certainly very circumspect in ^{His tenacity of opinion.} changing them. I have witnessed, however, several instances in which he yielded to the force of evidence in the modification of his views. He seemed to recognize geology, in particular, as a progressive science, in which new facts are constantly accruing, and therefore compelling readaptations of our views. He felt, indeed, in respect to all knowledge, the mathematics excepted, that modifications of belief, in well-regulated minds, are unavoidable, as the result of new information. Approach to higher truth through the sciences he seemed to regard under the aspect of that of besiegers to a beleaguered fortress. Principles and deductions, which were a boon and a triumph for us yesterday, lose their value to-day, when a new parallel of approach has been attained. He

is an eagle with his eyes put out, soaring, sinking, dashing, fluttering, now up, now down, now here, now there, criss-cross, every way.



"We will now consider this sketch on a perpendicular plane, to accommodate it to the eagle; but only reduce it to a horizontal plane, and it will suit a figure perhaps more applicable to his excellency, namely, that of an owl lost in the sunshine, driving after all the little sparrows, and all the little sparrows chirping after him; bumping against a stump, thumping against a hemlock, knocking against a rail fence, and last of all, we fear, beating his brains out against the breast of the bold eagle. To speak our mind freely, we think the Yankee, with all its boldness and cleverness, is the most egregious piece of humbug that was ever put off upon a gullible public.

"A. B. C."

lost his interest in what was abandoned, necessary as it had been to the present position, only in the advantage of which, and its sure promise of what was still higher, he allowed himself to rejoice.

But where evidence was wanting, he was never to be moved to a change by any amount of importu-
nity or temptation. This trait of character made ^{Dr. Noah Webster.} him somewhat impracticable as a collaborator in the philological task he was employed to perform under Dr. Noah Webster. Disagreements were to have been anticipated from the striking contrasts in their minds. They agreed in industry; but Webster was decided, practical, strongly self-reliant, and always satisfied with doing the best that could be done with the time and means at command. Percival was timid and cautious, and, from the very breadth of his linguistic attainments, undecided. He often craved more time for arriving at conclusions. When he happened to differ from the great lexicographer, he would never yield an iota of his ground. These differences led to an early rupture in the engagement, almost before two letters of the alphabet had been completed. He much preferred to relinquish a profitable undertaking to going forward with it under circumstances not agreeable to his elevated standard of literary accuracy and completeness. He felt that he could live on bread and water, or even give up these, if necessary; but he could not violate his convictions of what was true and right. He was a perfect martyr to his literary and scientific conscientiousness.

He evinced the same spirit in respect to the geological survey. As his mind was not satisfied, he ^{The geological survey.} would not make known his results to the Legislature. They demanded the Report, and he asked for an

extension of time. Thus he continued his labors from year to year upon a stipend scarcely adequate to cover his expenses. Instead, however, of nearing the goal, he only receded from it. New difficulties met him in the work ; fresh questions arose, in the progress of geology itself, that called for re-examinations. His notes swelled to volumes, and his specimens increased to thousands. He was in danger of being crushed under the weight of his doubts and his materials. At last, the people clamored for the end of the work. The Legislature became peremptory, and forced Percival to acquiesce. In 1842 (seven years from the commencement of the survey), he rendered an octavo Report of four hundred and ninety-five pages, in the Introduction to which he observes : " I regret to say, I have not had the means allowed me for additional investigations, nor even for a proper use of my materials, either notes or specimens. The number of localities from which I have collected specimens I have estimated at nearly eight thousand ; the records of dips and bearings are still more numerous. The Report which follows is but a hasty outline, written mainly from recollection, with only occasional reference to my materials, and under circumstances little calculated for cool consideration. It was written, however, with an intention to state nothing of the truth or probability of which I did not feel satisfied. None can regret more than I do its imperfection ; still I cannot but hope that it will contribute something towards the solution of the problem of the highest practical as well as scientific importance, the exact determination of the geological system of the State."

Of this remarkable production it may very briefly be
Remarks upon his Report. said, that it will ever remain a monument to the scientific and literary powers of its author. It

describes every shade of variation in the different rocks, and their exact distribution over the surface of the State. This it accomplishes with a minuteness never before essayed in any similar work. The closeness and brevity of his descriptions make it one of the driest productions ever issued on geological science, scarcely omitting the work of Humboldt, in which he sought to represent the whole of geology by algebraic symbols. Percival's work actually demands, and would richly repay, a translation into the vernacular of descriptive geology, — the language and mode of illustration employed by Murchison and Hitchcock. In its present form, it is safe to say, it has never found a single reader among the persons for whose benefit it was written.

It is no part of my plan to speak of his poetical reputation. This I leave to others better able to do him justice. Indeed, he had nearly abandoned poetical composition before our acquaintance began. But it is safe, perhaps, to say here, that his writings have placed him among the first of our national poets; and had he resumed this species of composition, he could scarcely have failed of maintaining, in the fullest manner, his poetic fame. He possessed all the qualities reckoned essential to poetical excellence. We have already spoken of his astonishing memory, a trait regarded of such importance to the poet by the ancients as to have led them to call the Muses the daughters of this mental faculty. His powers of abstraction and imagination were no less remarkable, — while for extreme sensitiveness he was unsurpassed. His judgment was clear, and his appreciation of language refined to the last degree. His musical feeling, too, as well of time as of harmony, was intense; while he had at command the universal stores of literature and science.

His impres-
sion upon
the literary
community.

In closing these reminiscences, I cannot avoid noticing some of the useful impressions exerted by Percival upon the literary community amidst which he passed so large a portion of his life. To some the influence of such a recluse will doubtless seem insignificant. The reverse, however, I am persuaded, was the fact. Few students came to New Haven without bringing with them, imprinted on their youthful memories, some beautiful line of his poetry. Few had not heard of his universal scholarship and profound learning. Next to an acquaintance with the teachers from whom they expected to derive their educational training, their curiosity led them to inquire for Percival. The sight of this modest, shrinking individual, as the possessor of such mines of intellectual wealth, it may well be understood, produced the deepest interest. In him they recognized a man superior to the clamor of vulgar gratification; his indifference to gain, to luxury, and every form of display, his constant preference of the spiritual over the sensual, was always an impressive example to them. The indigent student took fresh courage as he saw in him to what a narrow compass exterior wants might be reduced; the man of fashion and the fop stood abashed before the simplicity of his dress and daily life. And wherever the spirit of classic literature had been imbibed, and the capacity acquired of perceiving the severe worth of the true philosopher, the inspection of such a character, compared with the mere description of it in history, was like the difference between a statue and a living, breathing man. As at early dawn or in the gray twilight his slender form glided by, the thoughtful and poetic scholar could scarce refrain from uttering to himself, — “There goes Diogenes or Chrysippus! There goes one, by the side of whom

many a bustler in letters is only a worthless drone, many an idolized celebrity a weak and pitiful sham!" Such a character as Percival's, in the presence of a scholastic community, was a perpetual incentive to industry and manliness; and although he rarely spoke in its hearing, and has left us fewer published works than many others, still I believe that thousands yet live to thank him for lessons derived from the simple survey of his daily life.

Though there is little likelihood that his example of self-abnegation and devotion to study will be followed by many of our youth, nevertheless, the occurrence of such a model now and then in the republic of letters constitutes a pleasing as well as useful phenomenon, — if for no other reason, because it breaks in upon the monotony of literary biography, and communicates a portion of that picturesqueness to scholastic life which belongs to nature in everything else. That his course was fraught with happiness to himself cannot be doubted; that it was beneficial also to his fellow-men is equally true; and though he may be judged less leniently by minds incapable of pronouncing that to be a character honorable in the sight of God or man which deviates from their own standard or creed, — to others, who recognize the highest possible cultivation of the mental faculties and unsullied purity of life as the noblest ends of our being, he will ever occupy a position shared by few of mortal race.

His life a
pleasant
phenomenon
in letters.

CHARLES U. SHEPARD.

A letter kindly furnished by Professor James D. Dana of Yale happily completes both the chapter and the subject.

TO THE EDITOR.

NEW HAVEN, November 6, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR, —

In compliance with my promise I send you my opinion of Percival as the Connecticut geologist.

In the expression Percival the geologist, few will recognize a reference to Percival the poet; and yet, in my opinion, no one in the country has done better work in geology or work of greater value to the science. His Geological Report on the State of Connecticut is certainly the most unpoetical of works, it containing not even the most obvious deductions from his observations. But Percival had not finished his survey to his own satisfaction (which perhaps he never would have done with such views as he held of accuracy and perfection in research), when he was called upon for his Report; and, being unwilling in his sincerity to nature to put forward so soon any inferences of his own, he published only the bare facts arranged in their driest geographical order. Yet in this dry detail, and the admirable map accompanying the volume, there is not only testimony to assiduous labor, but an exhibition of results sufficient to teach philosophy to the mind capable of appreciating them. The practical or mineralogical part of the survey was in the hands of Professor C. U. Shepard, leaving to Percival the topographical and general geology.

On entering upon his duties, Percival saw before him two great problems: first, the character and origin of the trap ridges of the State, such as East and West Rocks near New Haven, the Hanging Hills of Meriden, and other similar heights to the north

The work
before him.

and south, — a most striking feature throughout Central Connecticut; and, secondly, the characters and origin of the granitic series of rocks which prevail through all the rest of the State. Having lived from his youth among the trap hills, the first of these departments of the Survey engaged his earliest and longest attention, and was most nearly completed.

It was the supposition of older geologists that West Rock near New Haven, and Mount Tom in Massachusetts, were parts of one continuous trap range. His observations early showed that this was wholly an error; that there was no one line; that, on the contrary, many ranges existed having the same general north and south course; and, moreover, that each was made up of a series of isolated parts. These trap rocks of Connecticut, as has been well proved, and as was early indicated by Professor Silliman, are *intrusive* or *igneous* rocks, — rocks that fill fractures of the earth's crust, having come up in a melted state from the earth's interior at the time when the fractures were made; and hence Percival's observations proved that there had been, not one long-continuous fracture through the State from New Haven to the regions of Mount Tom and beyond for the ejections of liquid trap rock, but instead, a series of openings along a common line, and that there were several such lines running a nearly parallel course over a broad region of country. He also found that the ridges which compose a range do not always lie directly in the same line, but that often the parts which follow one another are successively to the east of one another, or to the west, (*en echelon*, as the French style it;) and further, that the parts of the component ridges of a range were often curved or a succession of curving lines. He discovered, too, that in the

region of the Meriden Hanging Hills the trap ridges take a singular east and west bend across the great central valley of the State, — a course wholly at variance with the old notions.

The work which he accomplished was, in the first place, What he accomplished. an extended topographical survey of his portion of the State; and, secondly, a thorough examination of the structure and relations of the trap ridges, with also those of the associated sandstone. And it brought out, as its grand result, a system of general truths with regard to the fractures of the earth's crust which, as geologists are beginning to see, are the very same that are fundamental in the constitution of mountain chains. For this combination of many approximately parallel lines of ranges in one system, the composite structure of the several ranges, and the *en echelon*, or advancing and retreating arrangement of the successive ridges of a range, are common features of mountain chains. The earth's great mountains and the trap ranges of Central New England are results of subterranean forces acting upon the earth's crust according to common laws. The State of Connecticut, through the mind and labors of Percival, has contributed the best and fullest exemplification of the laws yet obtained, and thus prepared the way for a correct understanding of the great features of the globe.

The red sandstone rocks of the region teach that, in mediæval geological time, the waters made a continuous estuary from New Haven, on Long Island Sound, to Northern Massachusetts, — one continuous Connecticut River, or estuary, with New Haven as its southern terminus. The question then suggests itself, why does not the river flow now in this Connecticut valley down to

New Haven Bay. Percival's investigations afford the answer, although he has not suggested it. He shows on his map, as observed above, that the trap ridges make a nearly east and west course across the valley in the region of the Meriden Hills, just opposite the spot where the Connecticut River takes its eastern bend. Evidently the making of these hills, that is, the rending of the earth's crust, the ejection of the melted trap rock, and the accompanying uplifting of the surface, might well have forced the river out of its older course, and, without a doubt, it so did; and thus New Haven lost its great river.

Percival pursued his second subject, that of the granitic rocks, with similar fidelity, and mapped out with care the several formations. The State, however, was too large for the satisfactory completion of the survey in the short time allotted to it. The subject, besides, was vastly more complex and difficult than that of the trap ridges and the associated sandstone. He began the work well, but had to leave it for some future observer to finish.

With regard to these rocks, his mind became early entangled with a theory, bold and comprehensive, and likely to captivate a poetical mind, but ^{His mind entangled by a theory.} one which geological science has never favored. It was, however, with him, only an incentive to more scrutinizing research. He thought of it and talked about it at great length at times, with his one or two friends who had ears for such subjects. But his speculations nowhere appear in his Report.

His labors, moreover, were not without practical results; for he was the first to explain correctly the ^{Practical results.} origin of the iron-ore beds of Kent, and similar beds in the Green Mountain range.

It is greatly to be desired that the biography you have

in hand should contain the map* of Connecticut, which illustrates his Geological Report. With but brief explanations, especially if the trap ridges and dikes were colored, it would give to the reader the grander results of the survey, which few are acquainted with, even among those that are especially interested in such subjects, because of the limited edition of the Report published by the State.

Yours very truly,

JAMES D. DANA.

* On account of the cumbersome form in which this map was printed, it cannot easily be reproduced.





CHAPTER XIX.

1836—1843.

STUDIES IN TRANSLATION. — A MUSICAL POET. — HIS INTEREST IN POLITICS AND WHIG SONGS. — ODE TO OLE BULL. — HUMOROUS POETRY. — THE DREAM OF A DAY AND OTHER POEMS.



WE have already seen that the study of languages was with Percival an all-absorbing pursuit. Long before the Survey began, and then again so soon as leisure came to him, he occupied himself in making translations from the modern European languages. In February, 1836, Mrs. Theresa Robinson, wife of the late Dr. Edward Robinson, and known in literature under the pseudonyme of Assists Mrs. Robinson in translating Russian poetry. "Talvi," wrote to him for assistance in versifying specimens of Russian popular poetry for her volume on the Literature of the Slavic Nations, published in 1850. He had already published a few such specimens, and her request was exceedingly gratifying to him as an evidence of her appreciation of his translations. He very readily assented to her request, and attempted an answer to her letter in German, but this impeding the expression of his thoughts, he returned to the English. The cordiality of his letter is unusual; and as it contains his views of translation, a portion of it deserves quotation:—

"Did I not feel myself restrained by the circumstances which I have so poorly attempted to explain A letter to her. above in German, I should now with the great-

est satisfaction engage you my services. As it is, I am not willing entirely to refuse you the little aid I may render you. If you will allow me, at all events, the delay I have asked, and will take this as an expression of my willingness to use my best endeavors to comply with your request, but will at the same time prepare yourself for the contingency of a disappointment, I will hold myself ready to improve the first opportunity to accomplish what you desire. Still I may fail; or if I do not, I may do the task in a manner unworthy of or unsuited to your volume.

My views of translation may not coincide with yours.

His principles in translation. My first principle is that the version be *recht treu*; — my second, that it be *recht gut*: that is, I had rather it be strictly faithful, though a little inferior in composition, than that it be perfect as a composition, yet unfaithful to the original. I have applied these principles in several translations that I have published in one of the New Haven newspapers, copies of which I sent to Professor Ticknor and Dr. George Hayward. I particularly refer to a series of translations from Goetze's 'Stimmen' ('Russian Popular Poetry'), also a translation of Bürger's 'Lenora,' and one of Goethe's 'Wanderer.' These articles were less finished than they might have been, without sacrificing fidelity, still they illustrate the method I should choose to adopt in translation."

The volume contained four specimens from his pen, in the department of Russian Popular Poetry, two of which, "The Boyar's Execution" and "The Dove," he had already published in the Connecticut Herald. At the close of the letter, he says: "My time has been so occupied the year past with other pursuits, that I have made little progress in literature."

These studies in translation had been the occupation of

leisure hours from the time of his earliest publication, in which there were adaptations from Virgil and Anacreon. With Homer and Æschylus we ^{Studies in translation.} have seen him already familiar; but from the year 1827, onward, he became more engaged in these exercises than in the composition of original verse. The New Haven newspapers were the medium through which he gave them to the public, and there is every evidence that they soothed and rested him when his labors were unusually exacting, or when he suffered from want of employment and poverty. They embrace a wide field. In 1827, 1828, they ranged from Goethe and Schiller to Anacreon and Sappho, or to Tasso and Filicaja. The byways of ancient literature were searched for their choicest bits, and these enriched the corners of the papers. In a manuscript paper of translations from the Greek and other languages, he says: "In the summer of 1823, about the time when engaged on the Prometheus, and while reading Voss's hexameter translation, I amused myself with rendering select passages from Homer in English hexameters, not without some self-gratification, and with, at the time, the encouraging approbation of Professor Kingsley." Then follow abundant specimens of these translations.* In another part of the same paper he remarks: "I here introduce a series of translations from the Lyric *λείψα*, the first eight of which were done in 1827. The old Greek Lyric *λείψα*, though only fragments, a few words or lines (at most) shine out from the rubbish of ages, like diamond dust amid the dull, opaque cascalhos. I have selected them partly for their natural expression of feeling, and partly for their felicity of diction. In reading these fragments, one cannot but imagine that the

* Appendix H.

whole, of which they form but a scanty remnant, must have been richly teeming with all the finer qualities of poetry, — feeling, beauty of imagery and language, and true living expression. But we have only these wrecks, cast out like scattered remains of a broken ship freighted with the jewels and stuffs of ‘gorgeous Ind,’ or ‘with Sabæan incense from Araby the blest.’ Have they perished from the silent neglect of time, or were they at once exterminated by the violence of tasteless bigotry?” Other selections here given are from the Swedish, Russian, Danish, and the Low Dutch, all of which have never been printed until now. But those from Homer have most finish and beauty; and they at once, in the hands of a master, conquer success for the hexameter verse. His purchases of books at this time were almost entirely those relating to foreign languages. In the years 1840, 1841, the result of his studies among them, when the severer labors of the

His excerpts. geological survey were suspended, came out in a series of excerpts, published in the Daily Herald and Church Chronicle from the three leading groups of European languages, — the Slavonic, the Germanic, the Romanic. Each of these groups embraces four languages: the Slavonic, — Polish, Russian, Serb, Bohemian; the Germanic, — German, Low Dutch, Danish, Swedish; the Romanic, — Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French. These excerpts are somewhat freely translated, and one or two specimens are given from each language, prefaced by introductory notes and criticisms.*

He was now greatly interested in music, and this interest was deepened by his connection with the New

Music and the Sing-Song Club. Haven Sing-Song Club, a company who met to sing Whig songs in the exciting Harrison cam-

paign of 1840. To these he addressed a series of translations from the German song-writers, accompanied, as in the case of the excerpts, with valuable notes. The following is his introductory address to the Club:—

“TO THE NEW HAVEN SING-SONG CLUB.

“I propose to open to you, in a lot of old German annuals, a mine of old German music, which may not be unworthy your attention. The poetry is much of it from first-rate hands, and many pieces of less distinguished authors would do no discredit to more celebrated names. If the music is equal to the poetry, I can safely recommend it to your notice; and that it is not all of it inferior, may be inferred from the names of the composers. Among these, I observe the names of Naumann, Zelter (the correspondent of Goethe), Zumsteeg, Reichardt, Schulze, and Bergt, all men of note in the history of German music. Some of the tunes may be minors, and therefore not entitled to a voice at the present period; but most of them are doubtless majors, and although somewhat antiquated, and of course unfashionable, yet your skill may give them enough of the modern *ton* to render them admissible in circles not the most rigidly exclusive. As specimens of the accompanying poetry, I have prepared the following translations, not for the purpose of giving a literal version of the original, but rather to transfer, as exactly as I could, into our language the measures of the German. I have taken considerable liberties with the meaning of the original pieces, but I have endeavored to convey their general bearing and spirit.”

In one of these communications, which were published in the *Daily Palladium*, there is an elaborate comparison of the respective merits of Goethe and Schiller, — one of his very few literary criticisms: —

“I have here placed the two great masters of German Goethe and Schiller compared. song, Goethe and Schiller, side by side, not indeed in pieces which fairly measure their strength, but in such as show, I think, distinctly, their peculiar characteristics. It is indeed interesting to contemplate two such men, of the first class of minds, but of almost directly opposite temperaments and tendencies, intimately associated in feeling and in effort, regarding each other without the slightest touch of jealousy, and mutually admiring and loving each other’s respective excellence. It is a striking illustration of the influence of a pure and genial cultivation of art, in refining and elevating the feelings of nature, freeing them from all little shades and frettings, and opening them to the full and perfect love of the great and beautiful in themselves, abstracted from all external considerations. Yet these men had each to pass through his period of fermentation, as the Germans express it, when their inward natures were in a state of intestine warfare, faculty conflicting with faculty, emotion struggling with emotion, and the reflective and impulsive powers in constant hostile encounter. But that period past, each came out with a balanced and peaceful nature, self-active and self-confiding, and moving by its own inherent impulse through a bright intellectual region, like the sun along the unclouded firmament. But each too, from his innate peculiarity, passed through this fermenting period in his own peculiar way. Schiller, of an excitable nervous temperament, beset during his youth by poverty and sickness, baffled

in his intellectual hopes and forced into employment reluctant to his wishes, vented his uneasy spirit in the wild and tumultuous agitation of his 'Robbers.' Goethe, with a mild, genial, sanguine temperament, essentially sunny and joyous in his nature, with happy health and favoring fortunes, and disturbed only by the crossings of a sensitive heart, emitted his uneasiness in the sighings of 'Werter,' and racked off his spirit, like a full-bodied must, in a gentle and hardly perceptible agitation. But when they had perfected their art, and fully subdued their minds to its discipline, thus giving increased elevation and strength, without any diminution of orderly freedom, each still manifested his own peculiar nature, in the characteristics of his productions. In those of Schiller, we find a greater blending of the light and dark, a stronger *chiaroscuro*, a more towering, at times almost exaggerated sublimity, a more condensed and rapid energy, a quicker and acuter feeling at times even painful, a greater precision and distinctness of forms, approaching more nearly the classic outlines of sculpture, a surer directness of aim, combined with a more regular development of plot, and an intenser and more sudden concentration of interest in the catastrophe. In those of Goethe, we find ourselves now in an open, sunny region, surrounded by the graceful and ever-varied forms of living nature, flowers, and verdure in constantly diversified shapes and hues, all waving and flowing and overspread from the pure wide heaven, with a delicately harmonious blending of lights and shadows, melting into each other as softly as the undulations on a field of billowy corn; now in a tangled wild-wood labyrinth through which you move onward under the spell of a constant attraction, drawn on by some far-seen glimpse of bright beauty, or by some faint echo of sweet

sound, all under a subdued and enchanted light, as if you were wandering in an uncertain dream. In Goethe you are not seized by a powerful agitation, which you feel comes from some outward impulse, but all evolves as by the spontaneous operation of nature, and you are now borne aloft to the empyrean, now sweep downward to dark abysses, now are lifted in your soul by a high and holy expansion, now are touched by a fine point of keenly vibrating emotion ; but all passes on as if it were a part of yourself, as if it had grown into life in the natural progress of your being. Goethe, in his person, is not before you in his works. These are essentially objective, like Shakespeare's, but less perfectly so, for at times his vanity, — for by that weak trait he fell, how far below Shakespeare ! — at times this will peep smilingly from the openings of his labyrinths, and remind you who is leading you on in this fairies' dance. But Schiller is ever before you ; his sad and sublime features are ever looking on you through all his creations ; you feel ever in an awful but soul-subduing presence, toward which you yearn with intense sympathy and attachment ; your bosom trembles painfully with his suffering ; your heart chokes, and your tears flow, as he breathes his sorrowful but lofty resignation ; he rises, and you rise, and are borne on by his eagle wings ; you become feelingly a part of him, and are livingly embodied in his subjective. Hence the difference between the influence of these two great minds on the German people. The more cultivated classes, who are less agitated by the pressing necessities of life, and who accustom themselves to a habit of genial and graceful repose, are greater admirers of Goethe ; the humbler and less disciplined, who have kept their subjective in stronger activity by the sharper excitements of their condition,

and by not having formed habits of decorous restraint, which are but a renewal of the more regular quiet ongoings of nature, are greater admirers of Schiller. Where the character is subjective, habitually fixed in the feeling of self-emotions, there Schiller is the favored author; where it is objective, living not within self-consciousness, but externized, if I may use such a word, in the observation of the world without, there Goethe is preferred. Goethe, in one word, wins and fascinates; Schiller compels and subdues. Goethe is idolized by the Germans; Schiller is worshipped. I need not dwell on the peculiar characteristics of the pieces here offered; on the masterly blending of the darkly sublime and the intensely pathetic in Schiller's *Power of Song*, and the powerful contrast of soft, womanly delicacy and nervous, manly strength in his *Woman's Worth*; nor on the refined, yet natural tenderness of Goethe's *Nahe des Geliebten*, nor on the graceful and lively truth of his sea pictures. I can only regret that I have not been able to do better justice to them in my translations; but most sensibly do I feel, that just poetical translation, even when you can move freely in the language you attempt, is a task more trying and difficult than original poetical effort."

His personal relations to this club are delightfully given by one of its most active members, Mr. William G. Webster.

TO THE EDITOR.

NEW HAVEN, June 19, 1865.

DEAR SIR,—

In brief reply to your request that I should furnish you with some reminiscences of the poet Percival, I must

say that my intimate acquaintance with him was rather
Letter from Mr. W. G. Webster. of a musical than a literary character. During the Harrison campaign we belonged to a club of patriotic Whigs, whose weekly meetings were held at my house to compose and sing the songs of that exciting period. Richard S. Willis was our conductor, and Percival our poet. Willis would select some national German melody or chorus, and we would call
The poet of a Whig club. on Percival for the words to be adapted to the air. Retiring to my library, he would, in an incredibly short time, return with some patriotic, spirit-stirring stanzas, that afterward lent so much enthusiasm to that exciting period.

Percival was no musician himself, but his inquisitive mind was for months penetrating the mysteries of musical science. Almost every evening, during the intervals between our club meetings, he came to my house at a very early hour (frequently before tea), and going immediately to the piano, he would sit at arm's length, and with a single finger pick out the notes of some simple strain of his composition the previous day, and request me to record it for future use. A tedious process for him and me, as he might strike a dozen keys before the proper note would be produced, and sometimes a whole evening might be thus spent on a single theme ; and after all, on playing or singing the air myself, I would find it to be only a reminiscence of his earlier days. This discovery occasionally mortified the Doctor, and sometimes he would persist in claiming it as original ; but one evening, while we were going through this wearisome labor, my wife, from an adjoining room, struck up the very air he had been all day composing, and sung it through without the failure of a note. Percival stopped amazed, almost doubting

the evidence of his own senses; but on calling upon Mrs. Webster, who told him that it was a song she had rarely heard since infancy, he acknowledged that many of the simple strains he thought his own might be only the impressions left on his memory in very childhood.

Sometimes Percival would bring his accordion and amuse me with the result of his studies since his previous visit. Placing his fingers on the ^{His music.} keys, he imagined that sounds were elicited, when to my acute ear not a tone was audible. On one occasion, with his poetic eye upon the ceiling, he went off into an ecstasy of imaginary melody, of which I did not catch one note in three, and continued playing, or rather *manipulating*, so long that I fell asleep, but was soon aroused by his asking me whether the air he had been playing were a reminiscence or not. Awkwardly apologizing for my rudeness, I told him that his subdued style of playing had produced an effect so lulling that I could not resist it. With all his sensitiveness, he seemed rather gratified than annoyed by this, and very good-naturedly repeated a performance of which I could make out but little. Some weeks passed thus, Percival theorizing through the day, and at night bringing the results to me for practical illustration. But his investigations were soon carried so far beyond my depth, that I told him I should thenceforth turn him over to Mr. Willis. And to Mr. Willis, now a resident of New York, I will refer you.

Percival seemed to take but little note of time, often spending six or seven hours at my house at a single sitting, talking of nothing but music. If I was absent, however, he would wait my return until midnight if necessary, entertaining my wife with conversation of the most varied and interesting character; but the moment I

appeared he would break off and begin at once on his hobby, — music, — and on what he had accomplished or discovered on the previous day. Once he told me that he had been studying the character of Scotch ballad music, and after hours of examination, he had been surprised to find that its peculiarities arose merely from the absence of all semitones. One *morning early* I told him, half seriously, half sportively, that he was subjecting me to many a curtain lecture by his protracted calls. He replied, "Why this is not late. Last night I was with Professor North rather late; but on going to my room, I thought it too early to retire, and began kindling my fire for an hour's reading, when I was startled by a bright light, and on going to my window I *saw the sun rising*, and then thought it time to go to bed." But my hints had no effect. He still continued his protracted visitations until Willis's superior musical intelligence put my practical teachings wholly in the shade.

As to my literary connection with Percival, it was simply this. In 1843 I was compiling an addendum of some thousand words for my father's royal 8vo dictionary, and being a mere tyro in lexicography, I often called on him for assistance in tracing the origin, or in giving me the definition of a word, and in this I found him not only profoundly learned, but kind and patient to a degree that surprised me. I have known him to spend two or three days in the investigation of a single word; and had the character of our work been such as to justify the delay consequent on such minute investigations, his labors would have been invaluable. But in my case, as in that of my father and of Dr. Goodrich, his extreme anxiety to verify everything he did, and the delay consequent on this, detracted much from his practical

Literary connection with Percival.

usefulness as a scholar, especially for such a work as ours. . . .

Respectfully and truly yours.

WM. G. WEBSTER.

This sketch is completed by the account which Mr. Richard Storrs Willis, then a student at Yale, Notes from Mr. Willis. afterward communicated to the *Musical World*, a journal with which he was connected:—

“At this time, by reason of the . . . serenades, and other tuneful demonstrations, music was assuming unwonted prominence within college walls and under city elms. Percival caught the enthusiasm, and for a time his master-mind seemed to be filled with music,—musicalized. He had a collection of old German annuals, which contained a certain number of songs with music. These songs he translated into charming English rhyme; and turning the music over to me, it was soon arranged in parts for our club. We met and sang the music to Percival’s translations. Delightful hours these! Percival was always with us; and though he did not sing, we knew his soul was making melody with ours.

“Crowded out of the college buildings (for the swarming students in this institution [Yale] had overrun its edifices, like certain historical rats the bishop’s castle on the Rhine), my own ‘den’ was on the first floor of a private residence in the vicinity,—first floor, namely, by Hibernian reckoning, counting from the sky downward. And, indeed, it does not seem unbecoming that the starting-point of our enumeration should ever be in the skies. I owe it entirely to music that to this first floor Percival was in the habit of climbing, far away from the cellar of things as found in the lower world, to engage in delightful

converse on matters musical. My ear soon learned to catch his soft, springy step on the stairs, as he leaped up two or three at a time in the ascent. Books were immediately thrown aside, and our sitting commenced, which sometimes lasted for hours ; for his mind, if once started on the track of a subject, was entirely oblivious to the lapse of time. This was the case, whether within walls, or on the corner of a street on a cold, windy night ; and the listener who could at any time tear himself away from such instructive and fascinating communication with this wonderful mind (mysteriously vested in a long cloak that fluttered in the wind), though it lasted not unfrequently for hours, must have been more self-denying than I could ever find myself. Frequent failures in morning recitations I willingly submitted to from the greater knowledge acquired during long study hours from this wise, living book. But not I alone was betrayed by the morning ; for Percival once incidentally related that, having seated himself at a desk one evening to commence a poem for a coming Society celebration, he was suddenly aroused by what seemed to him a large conflagration, illuminating his apartment. He started to the window, and found the morning breaking in the east. He had written all night, and his poem was finished at a single heat.

“ But this singular man was now fast becoming a practical musician,—yea, more, positively a composer ; still more, even the inventor of a musical theory. He could find at that time no intelligible musical system, and therefore he invented a singularly ingenious one of his own. He also undertook to learn an instrument,—the accordion ; this he ordinarily brought with him under his cloak. He had, as yet, an appreciation only of the bare melody ; harmony confused his ear. The chords were

A musical
composer and
inventor.

therefore shut off from the instrument, and the soft breathing of the accordion, in some plaintive air, which he had himself composed, was all that was heard. But his voice, even in conversation, soft as the sighing of the west-wind, in music was almost inaudible. Not master of the art of writing music, he ordinarily brought his compositions jotted down in illegible hieroglyphics of his own, and wished to have them reduced to shape. But the melodies were in such strange, wild measures (like much of his poetry), the numbers were so irregular, that it was almost impossible to do this; still, in many instances, the attempt was successful.

“I recollect on one occasion our club was to sing at a little gathering of friends, and Percival, quite to our astonishment, had consented to accompany us, — for he had shunned all general society for years. Still more were we astonished when he expressed his willingness, while there, to sing a song of his own. He had brought his accordion. In a retired corner of the room sat his gaunt, thin figure, bent over the instrument. To me he had never looked half so weird-like; that noble Shakespearian head of his, the sharply cut, spiritual features, his eyes so full of the wild fire of genius, the thin, curling locks, all gave him the appearance of a minstrel come down from another age.

The poet
sings and
plays at a
party.

“We had already quieted the room for the expected song. Standing near him, I soon knew, by the motion of his lips, that he was singing. But no one heard him; for I myself could distinguish only the soft breathing of a melody of his that was familiar to me. After a while, the company, supposing that he was not quite ready to begin, commenced talking again. The bard sung on, and the song was finished; but few beside myself at all suspected

that he had been singing, most supposing, at last, that, for some reason, he had given up his intention. But his own soul had floated off upon his melody, and he had that sufficient reward which many a bard has, — the silent rapture of song. But I believe and hope Percival was convinced that we shared the pleasure with him.

“It will not be thought strange that I looked upon it as a great triumph of music, — that it was vindicating its eminently socializing and humanizing character, in thus drawing back to a regretting and appreciating world a spirit which had so long been unhappily alienated from it. Percival was approaching society again.” *

In addition to these reminiscences, Mr. Willis has communicated to me several facts which further Additional facts. illustrate the poet's peculiar ways. His visits finally became so excessively long, that Mr. Willis told him as gently as possible that he could hardly give him so much time. Percival took it very kindly. He would never enter his room if any one was in besides Mr. Willis; and when there, he never talked about his personal affairs, always upon scientific or musical subjects; but this was ever rich and instructive. He usually came with a bundle of old music or his accordion under his arm, and was always full of enthusiasm. Mr. Willis adds, that Percival showed great tenderness towards him, and even advised him to enter upon literary pursuits when he was graduated from college.

His rooms at this time, and for some years previously, Where his rooms were. were in the busy part of Chapel Street, over the place lately occupied by Sydney Babcock's bookstore, adjoining the present edifice known as Lyon's Building; and this continued to be his home till 1843,

* Poems, Vol. I. pp. xxxix. - xliii.

when he removed to the State Hospital and entered upon his hermitage. But he was here never free from annoyance. The shoemakers who occupied rooms near by made too much noise, and his own was so much in the heart of the city that he was continually in fear that his valuable library might be destroyed by fire. He also suffered from terrible attacks of the dys-^{A dyspeptic.}pepsia. He took his meals for some years at a place in Church Street formerly known as Bishop's Hotel. In those days the landlord ruled the^{His boarding place becomes a literary resort.} roast, and the roasts were often plump, fat turkeys. One part of the turkey the

“Ecclesiastic nose
Which, to the laws of order blind,
Nature has queerly placed behind,”

strange to say, Percival was extremely fond of; and “mine host” of those days tells me that he always saved that part for him, when, as sometimes happened, he was late at dinner. He ate rather sparingly, and never entered the bar-room or partook of anything from it during his entire stay. He usually sat down in the reading-room and occupied himself with the newspapers if he had occasion to wait; and here he often encountered strangers, who, attracted by the fame of his peculiar eccentricities, came on purpose to dine and catch a glimpse of him, and if possible, though in this they were usually disappointed, to engage him in conversation. In this way, the hotel became widely known as a literary resort. Percival usually ate his meals in silence, and used no unnecessary words, though he could easily be engaged in conversation, if persons had business with him. He had no respect or care for mere curiosity-hunters.

He was always interested in politics. From the time of his early editorship in 1823, when he used His interest in politics. his pen in favor of Mr. Calhoun, to his latest years, he was a frequent contributor to the newspaper press, not merely of poems and translations, but of short, spicy political squibs, in prose and verse, over various signatures. He was a great reader of the papers, and used to be seen almost daily at the rooms of the Young Men's Institute, conning over the news of the day. The New Haven journals were also the medium of frequent short articles on questions in science, derivations of popular words, or the intricacies of foreign languages. He was a strong Whig, as party names ran in those days, and all the public measures which for ten years preceded the Harrison campaign received satirical comments from his pen in the same vein as his lecture on Nosology; but the Presidential election of 1840 aroused his powers to their full activity. To any one who will run over his earliest volume, the number of his poems devoted to emancipation and the increase of human liberty in Greece and Italy and South America is surprising; nor should it be omitted, that among his first attempts at poetry is a severe denunciation of what has been known until lately as American slavery. These early impulses for liberty and patriotism were never forgotten. His latest volume contains patriotic appeals, which are as fervid and strong and inspiring as his most popular lyrics; and much of his popularity has been owing to his single character in this respect as a poet of national feeling and glowing devotion to his country. Who that has ever read it will forget his "New England"? His numerous odes on Independence ring with true tones. He had that breadth of vision which belongs to the statesman, and was thoroughly conversant

with the history, basis, and spirit of our government. And though an ardent politician, his patriotism was never confined to party; but with all this enthusiasm and devotion, in his poetry he was simply the recluse bard, animating others to duty. Now he became an actor ^{Actively engaged in the Harrison campaign.} as well as a poet. His interest in music led him to the Sing-Song Club, and his own zeal in the election of General Harrison led him to compose political songs; and these did excellent service in that stirring campaign,—the first Presidential contest in which the singing of patriotic and party songs was introduced to excite public feeling. These songs were taken to the club, and there being set to music, and found to be adapted to the purpose, were next published in the Whig papers of the city, and thence scattered widely over the country from Maine to Texas. The more Percival became engaged in this work, the more excited he grew and the more active. His songs multiplied apace. He went from his rooms to the club, from the club to the printing-office. One week, a campaign paper was issued, made up largely from his Whig songs; and a little later, his “New Haven Whig Song-Book” was published by the Whig General Committee for the ^{His Whig Song-Book.} use of the New Haven County Mass Convention, which was held on Thursday, October 8, 1840. But this contains only a small portion of those which were set to music and published in the papers. Among those which show best what he could do is the following, written after the election and reprinted, with the editor’s comments, exactly as it came out in the Daily Herald for November 30, 1840:—

“The following excellent Song, adapted to a popular and familiar air, is from the pen of Percival, one of our

most gifted poets, who no longer hides the light of his
 A specimen. patriotism under the geological bushel of ab-
 struse science. When such men speak, we may
 truly say 'The Campbells are coming.' Now

' Let the singing singers
 With vocal voices most vociferous,
 In sweet vociferation out-vociferize
 Even sound itself' — for

"SUCCESS TO TIPPECANOE.

"Give me the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws.'

"TUNE, — '*The Campbells are coming.*'

"The Day is all over; the Battle is done;
 The Field — it is conquered; the Victory won:
 We've carried our Leader triumphantly through;
 Then peal your huzzas for Old Tippecanoe;
 For Glory, bright beaming, has shown us the way,
 To the heat of the conflict, the thick of the fray:
 We've taught the proud Foeman, what deeds we can do;
 Then Hail to the Triumph of Tippecanoe!

CHORUS.

Old Tip is a coming from Ohi o!
 Old Tip is a coming from Ohi o!
 Old Tip is a coming — he's let his Log Cabin!
 Old Tip is a coming from Ohi o!

"Brave Tippecanoe has come out of the West,
 To deliver the land from a horrible Pest;
 A Plague, such as Freedom before never knew,
 Has fled at the touch of Old Tippecanoe!
 The *foul spot*, that darkened the roll of our Fame;
 The *black lines* recording our Annals of Shame;
 A proud-hearted Nation no longer shall rue:
 They've all been *expunged* by Old Tippecanoe!
 Old Tip is a coming, etc.

"Bold Tippecanoe has dethroned little Van;
 His country to raise, he'll do all that he can;

Sound Measures — he'll carry them steadily through;
Never fear for the honest Old Tippecanoe!
Like Washington, vigilant ever and just,
He'll always be faithful and true to his trust;
To cherish the Good, and give Merit its due,
Is Glory enough for Old Tippecanoe!

Old Tip is a coming, etc.

"A hard work he'll have, the foul palace to clean,
But soon it all garnished and swept shall be seen;
And decently simple and plain to the view,
Shall the House be that shelters Old Tippecanoe!
No carpets from Brussels, no Vanity Fair, —
Nor gold spoons, or bouquets, or *or-moulu* there!
Good stuff from our Workmen shall furnish it thro' —
The Mansion of Patriot Tippecanoe!

Old Tip is a coming, etc.

"No Parties Exclusive, no Minuet Balls,
No Levees *à la Royale* shall flout in his Halls:
The String of his Door shall be never drawn through;
Always Welcome's the word with Old Tippecanoe!
No Banquets he'll give *à la mode de Paris*;
No Wines of great price on his board you shall see:
But Sirloin, and Bacon, and HARD CIDER too,
Shall be the plain fare of Old Tippecanoe!

Old Tip is a coming, etc.

"From highest to lowest, all Offices then
Shall be filled with Good, Faithful, and Vigilant men;
Clear proof they are Competent, Honest, and True,
Is all that is wanted by Tippecanoe!
The Treasury then shall be safe and secure;
The hands that control it shall ever be pure;
For the Gold of his Country, a long Service through,
Never stuck to the fingers of Tippecanoe!

Old Tip is a coming, etc.

"No double-faced Janus shall sit in the chair,
Who to all sides a simper eternal shall wear;
But frankly he'll tell the whole Land what he'll do:
There's no Double-Dealing with Tippecanoe!
He has solemnly said, when One Term shall expire,
To the shades of North Bend he will surely retire:

And certain as Truth, when his One Term is through,
Again to the Plough will go Tippecanoe!

Old Tip is a coming, etc.

“Then let us all stand by the Honest Old Man,
Who has rescued the Country, and beat little Van:
The Spirit of Evil has gotten its due;
It's laid by the strong arm of Tippecanoe!
In the Front Rank our Nation shall now take its stand,
Peace, Order, Prosperity brighten the land:
Then loud swell the voice of each Good Man and True —
Success to the Gallant Old Tippecanoe!
Old Tip is a coming, etc.”

At this Convention Percival was present, probably the first and the last political meeting he ever attended in his life. As the speeches proceeded and the songs were sung, he became so excited that he clapped his hands with the others in applause. The excitement raged high, and Percival himself (says an eyewitness) was called on for a speech. He arose, but appeared greatly confused, hesitated, stammered, said he was no speaker, and could not make a speech, that he had never made one in his life, that his whole heart was in the cause, that he was very glad if his songs had been of service, but that he could only help through his pen. This is the only time he was ever known to address off-hand a promiscuous public assembly.

When the excitement had passed away, and Harrison and Tyler had been elected, his interest in public affairs did not abate; and when a few months later, a nation mourned over the sudden death of President Harrison, and the funeral solemnities were observed at the Centre Church in New Haven, three of the four hymns sung on that occasion were from his pen. The following dirge, a striking change from the tempestuous fervor of the songs, was one of them:—

Makes a
speech.

Writes hymns
for President
Harrison's
obsequies.

"How soon the dawn, that shone so bright.
Is deeply veiled in silent gloom!
How soon a nation's hope and light
Sinks in the darkness of the tomb!

A dirge.

"That hope has fled, that light is gone,
Shrouded beneath the funeral pall.
The mourning train move slowly on;
Their steps in measured cadence fall.

"Earth yields to earth, and dust to dust;
Low breathes the sigh, as sorrow flows:
The grave receives its solemn trust;
Our friend there takes his last repose.

"Soon he awakes, — a fairer morn
Breaks on him, from the heavenly throne!
Unstained wreaths his brow adorn;
He lives and moves in light alone.

"But still we pause in silent grief;
Still bend awhile beneath the rod;
Still seek in tears a sad relief,
And kneel before a chastening God.

"Yet not in vain, — a softer heart,
A purer spirit fills the breast;
As tears of tender sorrow start,
The angry waves of passion rest.

"We lay a brother in the tomb;
We mourn a father and a friend.
He sleeps not in eternal gloom;
Not his the night that knows no end.

"Soon he awakes, — a fairer morn
Breaks on him, from the heavenly throne!
Unstained wreaths his brow adorn;
He lives and moves in light alone."

His watchful eye and quick sympathy are seen in the following paragraph, which appeared in one of the papers two or three days after the event: —

"There was nothing in the procession of Saturday that struck me with more pleasure than the appearance of the Hibernian Provident Society. It was as gratifying as it was unexpected to see so many honest and respectable-looking Irishmen join in the solemnities of that day, as fellow-citizens of our great Republic, and fellow-mourners of our departed President. May they continue to cultivate the true *provident* spirit of Yankee liberty and independence, and labor to transmit it to their brethren in Ireland, till that beautiful island shall shine in the sea, 'redeemed, disenthralled, and regenerated,' the purest gem of the ocean. I beg them to accept the following, I hope not too familiar, and I can truly say, sincere tribute from one who wishes their society prosperity and perpetuity.

A tribute
to the Hi-
bernian
Society.

"P.

"O Erin, green gem that lies all in the sea,
So rich in *paratys* and warm Irish hearts;
When I think that a jewel, so rare, is n't free,
The tear of regret from my full bosom starts.

"O, there is the home of my childhood, the spot
Where I first dug the turf by the side of the moor:
Though humble and rude was my father's low cot,
To the stranger stood open his heart and his door.

'And that home of my childhood shall ne'er be forgot:
Of its green sod I'll think, while my green badge I wear:
O, I wish they 'd as free and as happy a lot,
The friends I left under the Sassenagh there.

"God's blessing be on thee, my own native isle;
Ever fresh be thy shamrock, and stout thy shillelagh:
May the green flag of Union soon over thee smile,
And every true Irish heart under it rally!"

After such an initiation into the mysteries of music,
Percival had no desire to turn aside from such
pleasant recreations of his loneliness; and when-

Interest in
public con-
certs.

ever any concerts of instrumental or vocal music were given by professional musicians, he was usually in attendance; and a day or two following there would be printed in the daily paper a poem suggested by the event, over the well-known signature "P." Such was the case when the Misses Shaw visited New Haven in August, 1842. The Scotch ballads which they sang went to the heart of the poet, who was as familiar with Scotch melodies as he was with the local geography of Scotland, (and he knew this so well that, though he was never abroad, there is scarcely a hamlet which is not down upon his manuscript maps,) and the result was the fine Scotch ballad beginning,

"Whither away, in thy swift-winged bark,"

which may be found among his published poems. Such, again, was the case a month later, when Mr. Wall, a blind Irish harper, gave a concert, and played upon his harp several of the finest Scotch, Welsh, and Irish melodies. Percival attended, and made the acquaintance of the harper, and afterwards wrote those beautiful lines,

"The harper once in Tara's halls," etc.

The celebration of S. Patrick's day this same year awakened his enthusiasm, and he both attended in person and furnished the following ode, a noble tribute to his large-hearted sympathy, which was sung on the occasion.

"AIR, — 'S. Patrick's Day.'

I.

"Hail to the morning, when first he ascended,
The Jewel of Erin, the Saint and the Sage, —
O, long may the rays of his glory be blended,
In harmony clear, on the poet's page.
Long may the sainted Patrick bless us,
Long as the flowers of Erin smile.

Poems suggested by them.

An Ode to S. Patrick.

True-hearted Irishmen ever shall follow him, —
 Ever pure prayers from warm bosoms shall hallow him, —
 Praises resound through each consecrate pile;
 And O, may his spirit awake to redress us,
 And rescue from tyrants our sacred isle.

II.

“Hark to the voice, that through Connaught resounded,
 Aloft from her mountain so high and so green!
 It spake, — through that gem, by the bright ocean bounded,
 No venomous creature again was seen.
 Roses and shamrocks filled each valley,
 Green waved the oak above each hill:
 Health, in each eye, sparkled clear as the fountain;
 Pure was each kiss, as the dew of the mountain;
 Swelled every bosom with joy, to its fill, —
 But O, he forgot, with his trusty shillelagh,
 To crush that foul hydra, the worm of the still.

III.

“Hark to the voice, that, through Erin resounding,
 Awakens the spirits of freemen again!
 It calls, and the hearts of old Ireland are bounding, —
 As they beat, snap the steel links of slavery’s chain!
 Millions there wake to pride and glory, —
 Think of their sires, the strong and free!
 Millions, too, warm with a patriot’s devotion,
 Send their fond wishes across the wide ocean,
 Erin! O beautiful Erin! to thee;
 For O, thou art rescued, and ever in story,
 Thy Patrick and Matthew united shall be.”

But the occasion of all others when he wrote im-
 promptu poetry was at the time of the cele-
 brated Norwegian violinist Ole Bull’s visit to
 New Haven, June 11, 1844. Percival welcomed him in
 a poetical address in his native (Danish) language, in the
 Daily Herald, on the day of the evening when his con-
 cert was held. His own means were so limited at this
 time, that a friend, knowing his tastes, sent him the requi-

His Ode to
 Ole Bull.

site dollar to attend the concert. Percival was carried away with delight, and after the concert was introduced to Ole Bull, and presented him with the following tribute, the first draft of which lies before me, and which was introduced to the public through the daily paper with a compliment from the editor to the poet: —

“We have been favored with the following piece of Danish poetry, Danish being the court language in Norway, addressed to Ole Bull. We need not name the author. There is but one man in our country who can clothe poetic ideas in such variety of language. We have poets who can make the Muse talk in their own vernacular, but to endue her with the gift of tongues is a power confined to our fellow-citizen. A literal translation is appended for those who do not speak Danish. The reference to the sword of old heroic Norway being turned into the lyre of the modern hero who subdues with music, is very fine.”

“TIL OLE BULL.

“Norge, Du staaer paa den sneetakte Tinde,
Höit nær ved Himmelens Blaa;
Seer mellem Klipperne Stiernen oprinde,
Skiönt over Engens Aa.

In Danish.

“Henne det klares i Skyen!
Skinnende ligesom Guld,
Lysner, paa Fieldet og Byen,
Dagen, af Glæderne fuld.

“Norge, Du hilser din lysnende Stierne,
Elsker den meer end din Heltetids Sol.
Solen nedstiger, og seer Du det gierne:
Stiernen oprinder til Himmelens Pol.

“Norge, Du stolt ved dit blinkende Sværd,
Stottende dig til dit gyldene Skiold,
Stred for de Kiære, for Alter og Hærd,
Kæmpedes mandigt — som Jeru var din Vold.

"Norge, din Helt over Bølgerne red,
Høit paa hans Havhest, guldlokket og skiön;
Snart over Havet og Landene skred;
Glad dog og seierrigt hiem gik igien.

"Norge, dit Sværd blev en Lyre:
Himmelen gav hendes Toner,
Hiertet og Sielen at styre,
Fuld som af Kummerens Moner.

"Hun Aandens Dybde kan röre,
Modet som Ilden antænde,
Høit nær ved Skyerne före,
Sorgen til Glæderne vende.

"Norge, dit Ærelys aldrig forsvinder!
Höiere Stiernen, Du elsker, oprinder!

"P.

"TO OLE BULL.

"Norway, thou standest on the snow-peaked summit, aloft near the
In English. heaven's blue; seest among the cliffs a star arise, fair over
the meadow stream.

"Yonder, 't is bright in the sky! Shining like gold, dawns on
mountain and town, a day full of gladness.

"Norway, thou welcomest the dawning star, lovest it more than the
sun of thy heroic age. The sun sets, and thou seest it willingly; the
star rises to Heaven's pole.

"Norway, thou proudly with thy flashing sword, propped on thy
golden shield, strove for thy dear ones, for altar and hearth, fought
manfully, — thy strength was like iron.

"Norway, thy hero over billows rode, high on his sea-horse, gold-
locked and fair. Swiftly over sea and land he strode, yet glad and
victorious returned home again.

"Norway, thy sword has become a lyre; Heaven gave its tones to
lead heart and soul, filled as with grief's longings.

"It can stir the depths of the spirit, kindle emotion, like fire, bear
us high to heaven, and turn sorrow to joy.

"Norway, the light of thy glory never fades. Higher the star thou
lovest rises."

Percival was chagrined and disappointed to find, instead
of the enthusiasm which he had expected in return for

such a testimonial to so distinguished a guest, that Ole Bull, remarking that there were few mistakes in it, seemed to care no more about it than he would for a dish of fruit or a bouquet of flowers.

It belongs here to mention his humorous poetry. Percival was not a wit; scarcely a humorist. His ^{A humorous poet.} attempts were usually overdone. The point was too little concealed. He once wrote a poem which was published in a newspaper, the National Pilot, after the style of Byron's "Don Juan," only that he surpassed Byron, not in impiety, but in a certain reckless audacity, illustrating the proverb, "It is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous." And some of his poems yet in manuscript read as if the very bedlam of wit ^{A parody.} had seized upon his Muse, while others are more carefully polished and elaborated. One of them is a parody of Bryant's poem,

"The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,"
entitled "January Thaw": —

"It is a sunny winter's day, a January thaw,
The robin cheeps, and screams the jay, and the crows how merrily
caw, —
The toad will pop his head from out his bed in the mire full soon,
If we have for a week or longer such a warm and cheery noon.
The flies around my window buzz, and hum their song of joy,
And the squirrel with his nut is glad as a child with his New-Year's
toy.

"O, 't is a day of smoke and slosh, but then 't is still and warm,
And the gulls go out secure to sea, for they feel no coming storm,
And the very fish are busy with their bright scales in the sun,
And the crows among the shelly ooze look out for number one, —
The gray goose and the gander and the drake with head so green,
Go muddling in the shallow pool, and sift its bottom clean.

"And O, how pleasant through the fields to take a silent walk, —
What though the mud is deep, and oft the brooks my passage balk,

When all is clear and bright above, what care I, if below
 I nothing find but spongy sod, and worse! dissolving snow;
 I will not, when the rabbit scuds so briskly o'er the plain,
 Because I cannot run as fast, of wet and mire complain.

"The chipmuck chuckles in the wood, as blithe as blithe can be, —
 Like Jacky with his sugar-plum, O none so brave as he, —
 Though by the margin of the spring the duck-meat and the sedge
 Are living still, and green the grass and moss around its edge.
 Yet though I look and look among the bushes and the bowers,
 The tender things, I find them not, — O where are they, — the
 flowers?"

Another specimen of his humorous and familiar style

A Revolution- is the "Ballad of '76": —
 ary ballad.

"A BALLAD OF '76.

"The British are a-coming, boys, the British are a-coming:
 The toot-horn makes a 'tarnal noise, and Jonathan is drumming;
 The sparks must leave their sweethearts now, the dads their wives
 and daughters,
 And they must go away to camp, and meet at general quarters.
 Up, up, and take your rifle, Dan, don't stand your eyes a-rubbing;
 Come on, we'll give the Hessians there a most confounded drubbing;
 I've got a dozen turkey shot well rammed down in my barrel,
 And when I find a *red coat*, — why, I'll shoot him like a squirrel."

"There was a tumult in the town, a tumult and a hub-bub;
 The Captain gave his orders out, the drummer beat his rub-dub;
 The Captain had a rusty sword, a cockade and a feather,
 Three-cornered hat, and face as red as nose in frosty weather.
 He strutted up and down his band as stately as a hero,
 He thundered out the word command, as absolute as Nero:
 'Attention, men, and shoulder you your post and then be jogging.'
 'I vow, it's hard,' said whimpering Dan, 'I'd rather be a logging.'

"And now his soldiers down the street in martial trim arraying,
 The fifes did squeak, the drums did beat, old Yankee Doodle playing;
 He strutted on before his men, as gallant as a turkey,
 But if they did n't mind his word, his face looked grim and murky;

He thundered out, ' Attention, men! be still that bustle there;
Now form a line; stop! that won't do, dress, soldiers! as you were.'
And thus they straggled on and on most sadly drooped and jaded,
Until before the meeting-house they halted and paraded.

" The parson then came forth to pray, to pray before they started.
He prayed that they might, on their way, be bold and lion-hearted,
That they might set their face as flint eschewing every evil,
And rout those red-coat Philistines, and give them to the Devil;
And thus he prayed an hour-long prayer, and gave the men his
blessing,
And sent them on their way to give the Germansers a-dressing.
And now they marched in Indian file behind their Captain loping,
Their guns, as when they go to hunt, were on their shoulders sloping.

" They marched o'er hill, they marched o'er dale, the way was long
and weary, —

The night began to gather round, and it was dark and dreary;
The rain began to drizzle too, their coats were wet and soaking,
They wished they were at home again, in chimney-corner smoking.
At length they heard the drum to beat, and saw the fires a-blazing,
Where folks were, for their victory, a noisy frolic raising;
They nearer drew and smelt the grog, they felt like pigs in clover,
For the British, *they had gone away*, and the battle, it was over.

" P."

His last volume, and, besides his contributions to periodicals, which were now very rare, his last poetical venture, was " The Dream of a Day, and ^{The Dream of a Day.} other Poems," published, in 1843, by his life-long friend, Mr. Sydney Babcock. It was a 16mo of two hundred and seventy pages. The poem which gave the name to the volume was " The Dream of a Day," probably the same which Professor North once read before one of the college Societies. The rest was collected from his occasional poems, his studies in the airs of different languages, and his peculiar classic melodies. He remarks concerning it in the Preface: " The reader will perceive, in running over the volume, that a great variety of ^{Its contents.}

measure is introduced (more than one hundred and fifty different forms or modifications of stanza), much of which is borrowed from the verse of other languages, particularly of the German." "The limits of the present volume," he adds, "as well as the character of its contents in general, have precluded from it a series of specimens of different varieties or systems of national verse, in which I had designed to give, under the general head of 'Studies in Verse,' imitations of the versification of all accessible cultivated languages, systematically arranged and illustrated by comments. These, as well as a quite extensive series of translations from different languages (accompanied with illustrative remarks), part of which have been already published in a fugitive form and part of which still remain in manuscript, may hereafter furnish materials for another volume, if an opportunity shall ever offer for its publication." The "Studies in

The pre-
face to his
"Studies in
Verse."

Verse" here alluded to have been left in a complete form, and are ready for the printer fresh from his hands. They have the following Preface: "In the present communication I have commenced a series of attempts at imitating the verse of different languages. I do not claim for these imitations anything like an exact correspondence with the original metres, but they may serve to show, perhaps, that our language is not entirely destitute of that almost universal metrical flexibility which has been claimed for the German. A language like ours, so abounding in consonants, with so slightly marked a quantity in its vowels, with so few light syllables of inflection, and with such a predominance of monosyllables, particularly in its more poetical portion, the genuine old Saxon and the early Norman, cannot succeed well in catching the precise movement

of languages characterized by opposite qualities. Even the more flexible German, in imitating measures regulated by quantity (the classic and Oriental), is obliged to resort to a different principle from that employed in the latter. In this first division of the series contemplated, namely, the Asiatic, I have had to proceed without the guide which a knowledge of the original languages would afford me. I have only resorted to such aid as treatises on versification might furnish me, particularly, Ewald's on the Sanscrit, and Sir W. Jones's on the Persian and Arabic. In the specimens here given, I have endeavored to catch something of the form, color, and spirit of the poetry of the different languages, so far as it was accessible to me, but in no instance have I translated or adhered imitatively to any model. In some of the specimens I have followed more closely the schemes of verse in the treatises alluded to; in others, I have taken greater liberties, or merely derived a hint from them, and formed a verse of my own." They are in imitation of the following languages, — Sanscrit, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Italian, French, German, Gælic, Welsh, Danish, Swedish, Scottish, Norse, Flemish, Finnish, Bohemian, Servian, Russian. He also composed frequently in the German and Italian; and his last published piece of poetry was a German poem, printed in one of the German papers in Wisconsin.*

* „(Für die Wisconsin Staats-Zeitung.)

„Der deutsche Patriot.

„Bist du dahin, du alte Freiheit, hin?
Ruf' ich umsonst zu dir, du heiliger Geist?
Noch schwebst du herrlich über meinem Sinn:
Ich fühl' es, wie du mich zum Kampfe reißt.

Of himself he says in the Preface to "The Dream of a Day": "In the long interval which has elapsed since the publication of my last volume of poems (sixteen years), I have been most of the time engaged in pursuits which have little or no relation to poetical studies, or which have been peculiarly adverse to them; consequently the composition of verse has been to me only an occasional amusement or exercise."

His occupations have not been poetical.

A writer in the Democratic Review for April, 1844, to which Percival was also a poetical contributor, gave a careful notice of the new volume, together with a somewhat extended biographical notice. He remarks upon the neglect which the poet now met with from the periodical press: "A new volume from the pen of Percival has been published for several months, and hitherto no one of the popular periodicals in our country has devoted so much as a single page to it. The Knickerbocker has given a notice of it in less space than it would occupy to herald the appearance of an ephemeral publication; Graham's Magazine refers to it, as would seem, only to carp at the versification of a single stanza; the North American Review refers to it only by implication in a notice of Griswold's 'Poets and Poetry of America.' It is so long now (sixteen years) since Per-

Criticism in the Democratic Review.

„Zum Schwerte greif' ich, das der Vater trug,
Und eile kühn zu deinem hohen Krieg;
Dort braust voll edler Muth der Heldenzug
Und steigt die steile Bahn zum letzten Sieg.

„Wir siegen einst! O Deutschland, du wirst frei!
Das deutsche Volk erhebt sich wie ein Mann.
Hin rollt die schwarze Nacht der Sklaverei,
Der Rache Blick zerschmettert den Tyrann.

„Madison, den 22. Februar, 1855.

„James G. Percival.“

cival last appeared as a poet, that his generation seems to have passed away and to be forgotten."

Explaining this, the writer says: "It may be, and it probably is, to a certain extent, Percival's own fault. His spirit will not brook the degradation of any mode of courting popular applause. . . . In the solitude of his study he pursues his literary and scientific researches. He has no organ of communication with the public, as others have, to herald his own praise. He has no clique around him to puff him into notoriety. His Muse is as unpretending as her inspiration is lofty, and yet she hardly condescends to submit her claims to popular judgment. She chooses a hidden corner to breathe forth her sweetness, without courting the praise of prejudiced criticism and without disguising herself in the show and tinsel, the gaudy illustrations of modern literature."

A writer in the New York Evangelist noticed the new volume in a careful and flattering manner: "It is In the Evangelist. evident that Dr. Percival has found amusement in labor, — for not without much thought and care could these pieces be composed, even by one possessed of his acknowledged genius. He has paid great attention to the art of versification, and has given surprising instances of those rich and beautiful modifications of expression which lie within the widely extending scope of the English language. A beautiful characteristic of these poems is their cheerfulness and exquisite purity. The author fixes his thoughts chiefly on beautiful skies, playful fountains, hills covered with foliage, sequestered shades, all varieties of flowery blossom, and all sweet sounds of music, and every tender and glad expression of human voices. Here is no indulgence of moroseness, gloom, or misanthropy, but the poet seemed determined that, for himself and his readers,

nature shall be arrayed in her most gorgeous attire, and language yield her finest intonations.

“It gives us pleasure, also, that on the subject of purity we can speak of him, as of Bryant, as without a fault. Often, indeed, he alludes to female beauty, for how should an amateur of beauty in all nature forget it in the fair portion of his own humanity? But his allusions are perfectly chaste. The ‘rose-lipped’ maiden, at whose charms he glances, is always virtuous and cheerful, as the blessed trees under whose shadow she muses, or the musical brook on whose bank she wanders. This is a rare and most excellent quality, — no less creditable to the refined taste and lofty genius of the poet than to the excellence of the man. It is just what we should expect from the pen of him who wrote the ‘Midnight Revery of the Lonely Wife,’ and who so excellently portrayed the ‘Sweetness of Woman’s Decay.’

“There is, moreover, a serene purity of style, a rich and scholarly unction, a spirit of graceful elegance, like the chiselled beauty of classic song, breathing over these verses, which declares the presence of a highly refined and cultivated mind. His joyous visions of nature, and even his eager admiration of the

‘Glory of the grass and splendor of the flower,’

are replete with allusions to the imagery of the ancients, and radiant with the beauty of classic ornament. In this he excels all American poets, and reminds one most pleasantly of the inimitable verses of Milton. Dr. Percival’s mastery of the art of versification, his exquisite adaption of both measure and style to the sentiment to be expressed, appear to great advantage in his ‘Lays and Songs.’

“Dr. Percival has one deficiency, as an American poet, in which he resembles Mr. Bryant, — we mean an appar-

ent want of interest in the prevailing religion of his country. We say apparent, for we cannot think him really indifferent. Yet his poetry does not exhibit, at least in this volume, that warmth and glow of tender and sublime emotion, which even the poetry of our religion, considered apart from its eternal truth, would be likely to enkindle in a mind so highly gifted."

Another critic also dwells upon his wonderful mastery of the art of versification: "That he is a true ^{In other} son of song, that his pieces whether grave or ^{periodicals.} gay are not like the immeasurable load of rhyming stuff which throngs our modern periodicals and magazines, that he is full of thought and feeling, — these are things which all are willing to acknowledge. Indeed, in his own peculiar sphere, Percival has no superior among the poets of America. As an exquisite modeller of verse, in all its numerous kinds and forms, he is unrivalled. He seems also to write with great ease and rapidity. This not only the flow of the verse itself would prove, but the quantity of metrical effusions renders certain." And still another adds: "The author is regarded by many of our best scholars as having been more successful than any American writer, living or dead, in his imitations of the ancient classics."

There is truth also in the following, the secret, indeed, why he is less popular at the present day than the other poets contemporary with him: "A considerable part of the volume is made up of songs that thrill on the charmed ear and almost sing themselves. In descriptions of natural scenery, too, these poems do not fall at all behind the author's earlier writings. On the whole, this will be pronounced a work of uncommon beauty and finish, though not one of great moral power. Percival is too shy a man

to take deep hold on our sympathies. He draws the curtain too studiously over the workings of his own soul, and fills up his foreground with graceful fancies, pleasant, but not powerful and all-absorbing."

The following from the pen of Mr. Bryant was printed in the Evening Post, when the collected edition of his works was published, in 1859 : —

" We had hardly thought Percival had written so much as is given us in these two compactly, but neatly printed poetical volumes of four hundred pages each. Percival, however, wrote with a sort of natural fluency, which approached nearer to improvisation than the manner of most of our poets. One can easily imagine, in reading him, that he had some trouble to hold back the thick-coming and crowding fancies till he had time to array them in language, of which he had a ready command, and all the stores of which were open to him. No less musical is the versification than the diction is rich and flexible; there is nothing harsh or abrupt, and nothing obscure. We could not say that there is any striking similarity of Percival's genius to that of Moore; and yet there are some poems of his lingering in our memory of which we could say that, without a little reflection, we should hardly know to which of these poets to assign them, so nearly do they resemble those of Moore in a certain brilliancy of imagery and sweetness of versification. Such, for example, as that beginning with the line,

' In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,' etc.,

and

' Deep in the wave is a coral grove.'

Some of the Sonnets have all the majesty of those of Wordsworth. One of the finest is the last in the first

volume of this collection, though it is not cast in the regular Italian mould, beginning with the line,

‘ O thou sole-sitting Spirit of Loneliness.’

“ But we do not mean to enter upon an estimate of the merits of Percival’s poetry. Those who look over these volumes will, we think, wonder that poems which gave so much delight when they first appeared have been so much neglected since, and will be glad of the opportunity of renewing their acquaintance with an author who, while he was one of the most learned of poets, was also one of the most spontaneous in the manifestations of genius.”

By far the most careful criticism which the volume received was an article in the *New-Englander* for January, 1844, from the pen of Dr. Erasmus D. North, itself showing a mastery of the details of versification only second to Percival’s.





CHAPTER XX.

1843-1852.

HIS HERMITAGE. — HIS ROOMS. — FAVORITE RESORTS. — STORIES OF HIS PECULIAR LIFE. — PRIVATE STUDIES. — HIS LIBRARY. — THE PERCIVAL CLUB. — SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY ENGAGEMENTS. — REMINISCENCES OF MR. NOYES.



ENTER now upon the period, dating from 1843, of his seclusion from men and his residence at the Hospital in New Haven. From this time until he began his Western geological survey, he was not brought in any way before the public, and the general idea of him, even in the city which he loved and had made his home, was that of a misanthrope and hermit. His close and laborious confinement to the Survey, and the stories which are always current about one who shows any eccentricities of character, helped to confirm this impression. The greatest curiosity prevailed to know him and to penetrate into the mysterious apartments where he lived, but he never gratified it; and it was only by some ingenious artifice that the inside of his rooms was ever seen. A young physician, who was in attendance at the Hospital, attempted it and succeeded. The poet had a woodpile in the rear of the building, and would often go out to cut his wood. The physician, observing him there one day, went out and without a word began to split his wood. In a

He enters
upon a
hermit life.

few days the friendly act was repeated, but not a word was exchanged ; and so for some time Percival found assistance in preparing his fuel. One day his new-made friend proposed to carry it up to his room. The offer was at first refused, then accepted ; but he would allow the wood to be brought no further than the door. Again it was repeated, and the young doctor, as if in forgetfulness, followed the poet into his hermitage, and, taking a hasty glance, retired in silence. His brother, and a very few friends with whom he was most intimate, like the late Mr. Herrick, were always welcome ; but no one else, especially no stranger, was ever allowed to cross his threshold. If they came to see him, he would respond to the call, untie the rope which fastened the knob to the wall from the inside, and, standing in the hall, talk for hours, or take his guests, as once he did Mr. Longfellow, below into the reception-rooms of the Hospital.

His unwillingness to admit strangers to his own rooms is easily accounted for. The late Mr. Sheldon ^{Why he lived} Moore, his life-long friend, once remarked to me ^{in seclusion.} that the poet seemed born to be a bachelor instead of a married man. Even if he was not born to such a destiny, his hard experience of life compelled him to be one ; and being now, since all direct income was cut off, too poor to board any longer at the hotel, he was taking care of himself and "keeping bachelor's hall." His living was exceedingly plain and simple. He used to go to the stores in the evening to buy crackers, herrings, dried-beef, fruit, and other food which could be easily prepared ; and as his health was often miserable, it was no unusual thing for him to go whole days without food. In this way his personal expenses were reduced to a minimum ; and as he had his rooms for a nominal sum, he

could live almost upon nothing. This explains why he could subsist so many years with no other visible means of support than the chance jobs of scientific or literary work which came to him. Then again he was always jealous of his privacy, and did not wish to be interrupted.

The gentleman who had charge of the Hospital in these years, Pliny A. Jewett, M. D., often had access to his rooms, and was always consulted by Percival when he was in any trouble ; but he was allowed there only because the poet could not do without him. From him I learn

His rooms. many particulars of his hermit life. He was present when the rooms were opened after Percival had left them, and he knew more of his habits at this time than any other person. He had three rooms. His library and minerals were in one, his study in another, his bedroom in another. His bed was simply a cot, with mattress above. There were no sheets, and a block of wood placed under the mattress served for a pillow. There were two woollen blankets on the bed, very dirty. Places at the foot showed that he had laid down with his shoes on, and it was evident that he had often slept in his clothes. The rooms were very untidy, and probably never swept. There were perhaps two inches of rolling lint upon the floor. There was a beaten path from his bed to his stove, to his writing-table, to his library, and to the door.

His greatest difficulty while residing here came from the curiosity of women, who were always eying him as he went to and from his rooms. There was one in particular, an unmarried woman, as singular as he was, who had taken rooms near his own, and who was obliged to make use of the same hall. She gave him great annoyance. He was fond of being out in the

Troubled by
the curiosi-
ty of fe-
males.

night; his hours were never regular; and this ancient dame was also fond of walking in the darkness up and down the long corridor, and he would often see her as a dimly visible ghost in the distance, or she would unexpectedly confront him in daytime in the hall, muttering to herself, but never speaking to him. He was afraid of her, and came to the Doctor one day in great agitation, setting forth her freaks and asking what he could do. The Doctor, with a cool audacity, advised him to marry her, and that ended the matter. It should be added, however, that his rooms were afterwards partitioned off, so that he could have an entrance through the steward's apartments, and not have his privacy disturbed. In contrast with this experience, a lady, who was a little girl then, and who used frequently to visit a sick woman at the Hospital, tells me that she always bowed to him as she met him in her walks, and that he always returned her salutation with a pleasant smile.

His movements were often inexplicable. He would go away for a week at a time, no one knew where, but he always came back, often in the middle of the night. His favorite method of travelling was on foot, and ^{His favorite} this his poverty also compelled. He greatly en-^{walks.}joyed botanical and geological excursions. Sometimes an intimate friend accompanied him, as Mr. Augur or Mr. Monson; usually he went alone. Dr. Jewett once met him on one of these tours a few miles from the city, and invited him to ride, but he declined, saying he liked to walk. At another time, he said there was not a square mile of the State which he had not been over. A favorite retreat with him was Mount Carmel, a bold elevation some seven miles north of New Haven, where a cave was called by his name. He once took the elder Dana,

who was lecturing in New Haven at the time, to his chosen haunts here. Another place of resort was the Hanging Hills of Meriden, from whose formation he derived a theory concerning the Mosaic account of creation. He knew no obstacles to these excursions, and he was always an enthusiastic botanist. The lines of Aubrey De Vere, written for another purpose, aptly describe him : —

“ I have beheld him on a wintry plant
 An eye delighted bending full an hour !
 As though the Spring o'er every tendril scant
 Crept on beneath his ken, from flower to flower :
 Low shed and brake to him were hall and bower !
 O'er a leaf's margin he would pore and gaze
 As on some problem of the starry maze ! ”

He often visited Berlin, staying with the friends of his boyhood. On his way home from one of these visits, while waiting for the cars at the Berlin Junction, he met the late G. P. R. James, the novelist, who, in company with a mutual friend, had been spending the day in Farmington. Mr. James had all the airs of a man of society ; and Percival was specially shrinking and modest in the presence of a stranger, making his worst impression at first. The parties were introduced, and an attempt was made at conversation, but they did not get on at all. Percival showed a decided repugnance, Mr. James a genteel contempt. Soon entering the cars, they took different seats, and Mr. James said, “ My friend, who is that Mr. Percival ? ” It was replied that he was a distinguished poet, when Mr. James said, “ A little cracked, is n't he ? ” The gentleman with him met Percival a few days after, who inquired, “ Who is that Mr. James ? ” “ G. P. R. James, the novelist,” was the reply. Said Percival, “ A little drunk, was n't he ? ”

Introduc-
 tion to G.
 P. R. James.

Percival shared with Dr. Johnson that strong feeling of independence which makes one in need jealous of the favors of others. The late Professor Silliman, noticing that the cap* which so long peered above the cloak in which he wrapped himself had become altogether too shabby, left word with Mr. Mansfield, a hatter on Chapel Street, to present him with a new hat. In the most delicate manner possible, Mr. Mansfield said to him that any hat upon his shelves was at his service, but the poet turned on his heel in contempt. One Thanksgiving-day, when it was known that he must be almost suffering for the want of food, the janitor of the Hospital sent him a generous dinner. It remained at his door untouched. A kinsman once paid him two dollars for information which he had received from him. He had repeatedly refused to receive money; but it was slipped into his hand as they parted, with the expectation that Percival would keep it. In a few days, however, the money was returned through one of the booksellers. He thought it was the sacred duty of the scholar to impart freely all the information he could, when applied to; and he would stand for hours in the hall leading to his rooms, thus dispensing his knowledge to the friends who came to him.

His outward literary activity had now almost entirely ceased. Except a poem which was read by his friend, Dr. North, before the Young Men's Institute in New Haven, in December, 1846, and two or three which appeared in the Democratic Review, and a song † for the Alumni at Yale, nothing was published by him for some time. Yet he had ample opportunities to have supported

* This is preserved in the rooms of the State Historical Society in New Haven. It was a common glazed cloth cap.

† Appendix J.

himself very comfortably in this way. The late Rufus W. Kindness of R. W. Griswold. Griswold was interested in him, and wrote to him in June, 1842, offering him, as the editor of Graham's Magazine, ten dollars for any poem, whether sonnet, song, or fragment. He said, "A poem from your pen will be regarded as a draft payable at sight." He also begged leave, as having connections with many of the leading publishers, to offer his services "in any way in which you see fit to command me"; and these kind offers were again made several years after. His difficult dealings with publishers had made him exceedingly shy, and nothing came of it. But he now had very gratifying evidence every year, in the shape of elections to honorary memberships in the literary societies of nearly every embryo university in the land, of the high regard in which he was held by the younger men, to whose care his reputation as a poet must be committed. He was also elected, in 1846, a member of the American Oriental Society. In those days the unavoidable consequence of a widely extended reputation was the constant impertinent dunning, on the part of ambitious youngsters, for autographs; but they got no answer, even when they enclosed the postage on the letter to be returned. He seldom gave his autograph to any one. Once he gave it to Mr. Augur, once to President Woolsey, and once to Yung Wing, a Chinese scholar at Yale, with whom he cultivated an acquaintance, and whose autograph, given in exchange in Chinese, is among the poet's papers.

Stories of his communicativeness. An incident was related to me by the late Professor Olmsted, which should find place here. Percival was always interested in the meetings of the Connecticut Academy, composed of the literary and

other professional gentlemen in and near New Haven; and once he read before them a scientific paper on the geological rock formations about the city, particularly east and west Rocks. He had a new theory to account for them, and in his low, whispering, uniform voice spoke perhaps an hour and a half. The members were at first greatly interested, but his monotone and the intricacy into which he led the subject soon grew wearisome. At length he stopped a moment, and Professor Silliman, who was chairman, jumped up, and thanking him for his valuable remarks, said he would add a few words, and then dismissed the meeting. Percival took offence, and never forgot it. There are many other instances of his extraordinary communicativeness. "I have known him to stand and talk," said one who knew him well, "in an open doorway, holding by the handle of the door, at midnight, in the coldest night of a severe winter, until, for my own comfort, I was compelled to insist upon his coming in or going out. At that time, I knew he had not tasted food for twelve hours, perhaps for a much longer period." On another occasion, he was induced to spend an evening at Mr. James A. Hillhouse's, with a small circle of friends. In the conversation some question happened to arise in regard to hickory-trees, and his opinion was asked. He immediately began a dissertation on hickory-trees, in the midst of which he was at length interrupted by the breaking up of the party at two o'clock in the morning. In like manner, when visiting one day at the house of Dr. Gridley in Berlin, he happened to go into the garden, where Mrs. Gridley asked him a question about a peach-tree, upon which he gave her in detail the history of the tree, the places most favorable to its growth, the different varieties, and all that could be said about it. Dr. Jewett

tells me that he always used to avoid him, if possible, in the street, because he would detain him so long at the street-corners with these conversations ; and when, as sometimes, the Doctor was obliged to cut him short, to attend to his professional duties, the next time they met, Percival, with the remark, "As I was saying," would resume his discourse where he had left off.

It is difficult to ascertain what were his private studies in all these years. His brother tells me that once, when he visited him, he found him engaged in studying the chorus of songs in different languages, as a part of extensive studies in music ; and one chorus he sang to him, remarking that he thought it very fine,

" Old Briton's wooden walls,
Old Briton's wooden walls,
Old Briton's wooden walls,
We 'll toast
Old Briton's wooden walls."

He was also engaged upon the deeper study of the modern European languages, the same pursuits which had beguiled his loneliness and leisure for many years before. He was often at the college library ; but he loved, with the spirit of a true scholar, "the still air of delightful studies" among his own books. His library, which numbered at his death some ten thousand volumes, was his most congenial home. This was very miscellaneous, containing curious and quaint works in all languages, and especially full in books on philology, history, and theology. It would seem that he bought every singular theological treatise he could lay hands on. There were also numerous geological reports, works on geography, and the leading poets in all languages. He had read so widely, and with such distinct impressions, that his

library was chiefly filled with those works which made good the gaps in his own knowledge. He hardly cut the leaves of his books, and it is curious to find his Greek tragedies, books often in his hands, just as they came from the press. He read faster than another could count the lines upon the page, and did not often need to look at a book the second time. He derived most of his knowledge of the current literature of the day by thus conning over new books as he stood by the counter in the book-stores. His valuable library was scattered at a public sale in Boston, in 1860, and but little now remains to show the wonderful reach of his knowledge and attainments. A neighbor in Kensington, whom he used often to visit, — the late Sheldon Moore, — jotted down in a diary some brief accounts of his conversations Notes of his conversations. on important subjects. Under date August 25, 1848, he writes: "Dr. Percival is now here. His health has not been very good lately. He seems to doubt the capacity of the French to establish a republic, says they are substantially the same people they were in the days of Tacitus. He also thinks the water-cure system pretty much a humbug." Under date September 2, 1848, he writes: "Dr. Percival says the *casus* of the ancient philosophers was not what we now call chance, but was a formation of the universe by the *fall* of the particles tending downwards, or to the centre, but governed by fixed laws; but, if I understood him rightly, not excluding a Creator or Lawgiver. In Greek, *πτῶσις* expressed the same idea." Under date April 24, 1849, he writes: "Dr. Percival visited me. I noted that he did not think the accounts of the great extent of the California gold-mines likely to be true, being contrary to the experience as to former mines." In a manuscript paper, which evidently belongs

to this period, the poet gives us some insight into the way in which he spent much of his time ; and his poetry amply shows that the following confession is real : " I have of late fallen into an unconquerable habit of dreaming with my eyes wide open. My whole life has been for some time a round of reveries. I have lived in a world of my own imagining ; and such has been the vividness of my conceptions, that I can, at any moment when I have an inclination, summon them to my mental presence with the ease of a magician of old, when he evoked with his charmed rod the shades of the departed. There is a weariness in the long-continued repetition of any habit, however delightful it may be in the beginning, and so I have found it with my habit of day dreams."

Yet he was not entirely a recluse. There were a number of men living in New Haven at this time, each idiosyncratic, all bachelors excepting one, who, with all their peculiarities, showed a striking fondness for each other's society. Each one was enough different from his fellow to like him, and their acquaintance gradually ripened into an informal club. The members were the late Erasmus D. North, M. D., a man of genius and learning, for years the Professor of Elocution at Yale, and called " Lord North " by the students ; the late David Hinman, an engraver ; the late Horatio Augur, whose Jephthah's Daughter is pronounced to be one of the finest pieces of statuary ever wrought by an American sculptor, and who taught himself the sculptor's art ; the late William Tully, M. D., a man who was a walking encyclopædia in his profession, but who lacked the ambition to put his admirable powers to service ; and the late Edward C. Herrick, a prompt, energetic, self-made man, who was always a friend to Percival, who

Not entirely
a recluse.

The Percival
Club.

shared with him a peculiar fondness for scientific pursuits, and who was his financial adviser in later years. Mr. Charles Monson was also sometimes a member. They used to board together, and this was probably the way in which they discovered their fondness for each other, though at this period Percival lived alone at the Hospital; but he often spent his evenings with them; and as none of the party ever regarded the difference between day and night, their sittings were apt to be regulated entirely by their conversational powers. They were all great talkers; each one must have his say, and each knew so much more than ordinary people that it took a long time to exhaust a subject. Hence they often sat up the greater part of the night. They would be talking together, ^{Their late} and about midnight Percival would think of ^{sittings.} going home; their conversation unfinished, Dr. North would accompany him; still talking, Percival would then return with Dr. North, often repeating the walk several times; and at their sittings, morning would not unfrequently break in upon them. A writer in Putnam's Monthly for December, 1856, relates an anecdote concerning one of them. The poet had been spending an evening with his friend Dr. North, and, on leaving, the Doctor accompanied him to the door, where their attention was attracted by a remarkable light in the horizon. It seemed too far east for the aurora and it was at the wrong time in the month for the moon. While they were watching it with intense interest, speculating on its probable cause, and congratulating themselves on their good fortune in witnessing so remarkable a phenomenon, the diffuse light was suddenly displaced by a more concentrated body of rays; and the round red sun, rising at his regular time, destroyed the phenomenon and disgusted the observers.

Occasionally he had scientific engagements, calling him away from home. These were procured for him by his high reputation as the Geologist of the State. In 1851, he was engaged in examining a coal-mine at Hillsborough, Albert County, New Brunswick. At about the same time, he went westward to make a survey of Edwards' Island, Lake Erie; and it was, perhaps, on the same journey that he was employed by an Eastern company to make a mineral examination in Southwestern Missouri, and went upon the Ozark Mountains; but the journey was fruitless. Returning home, he was induced to examine for Mr. C. D. Archibald, an English gentleman, some iron-mines in Nova Scotia. They were declared to be in great confusion by several scientific men. An examination convinced Percival that they were at fault. He pointed out to the owners the order of the arrangement of the ore and rock; and when the plan was adopted and followed, it was found to be correct, and the mines were afterwards worked with great profit. Such were his scientific occupations during the latter part of the time included within this chapter. He had other work also. Within this period he labored in the department of lexicography again, translating for Professor E. A. Andrews, letters A and B of Freund's Latin Lexicon, and with his usual diligence and faithfulness verifying examples and establishing authorities.* He was also engaged upon the revision of Webster's Dictionary, which was completed, under the superintendence of the late Professor Goodrich, in 1847. In the Preface to that work he paid the following tribute to Percival: "It is obviously impossible for any one mind to embrace with accu-

Scientific engagements in 1851 and later.

Philological labors.

* Poems, Vol. I. p. xxx.

rary all the various departments of knowledge which are now brought within the compass of a dictionary. Hence arise most of the errors and inconsistencies which abound in works of this kind. To avoid these as far as possible, especially in matters of science, the editor, at first, made an arrangement with Dr. James G. Percival, who had rendered important assistance to Dr. Webster in the edition of 1828, to take the entire charge of revising the scientific articles embraced in this work. This revision, however, owing to causes beyond the control of either party, was extended to but little more than two letters of the alphabet." The writer in Putnam's Monthly adds the true reason why this engagement was broken ^{Why they were discontinued.} off: "He could only work in his own time and way. Nothing could be passed over until thoroughly finished; and the consequence was, that he would sometimes spend days upon some single insignificant word, whose history, if attainable, was of no importance. In the mean time, printers, compositors, and proof-readers must be paid for standing idle; so, after a short trial, they were reluctantly compelled to give him up, and go on without his aid. During the time he was occupied on this work, I occasionally saw him at Professor Goodrich's rooms. He pursued his investigations standing by the side of the book-shelves; generally holding two or three books in his hands, having a pile of others collected at his feet, wearing on his head his ragged leather cap, usually keeping his back turned toward any persons in the room, and never, while I was present, speaking or raising his eyes from his work."

I complete this chapter with a letter which has been kindly furnished by Mr. Benjamin Noyes, covering this entire period, and briefly mentioning ^{A letter from Mr. Noyes.} earlier events:—

TO THE EDITOR.

NEW HAVEN, January 13, 1866.

DEAR SIR, —

. . . . Percival was a daily frequenter of the book-store of General Hezekiah Howe, where the late E. C. Herrick and myself were clerks, dating back to 1831 or 1832. The next succeeding three or four years were made exceedingly interesting, as connected with Percival, and the publication by General Howe and the reading in the store of the proof-sheets of Silliman's Chemistry, Day's Mathematics, Bakewell's Geology, Bridge's Conic Sections, Tacitus, Cicero de Oratore, Olmsted's Philosophy, Sibb's Hebrew Lexicon, and several books of minor importance. The authors or editors of these books used to confer frequently with Percival and Herrick, when reading the proofs, so that the bookstore became the resort of literary and refined professional gentlemen, to avail themselves of Percival's universal acquirements and of his discussion of intricate, scientific, and other questions which would be raised concerning the books then being printed.

As a boy in the store, I began to carry books by the bundle to Percival's lodgings in Broadway, where he lived alone and in seclusion for many years. Upon no occasion would he permit books to be brought to him except in the night season; and no light was allowed. Indeed, it was said that no one entered the building for years, except myself, who had the privilege of carrying up his books. It was known that, after providing scantily for his own subsistence, the remainder of his means was devoted to the purchase of books, and

Mr. Noyes
carries books
for Percival.

even a considerable debt was contracted and a mortgage of his books was made, which was not removed until the settlement of his estate after his death. After completing and being paid for his geological survey, he devoted almost the entire sum to the purchase of books, The poet spends his last dollar for books. nearly all of which, to the extent of at least five hundred volumes, were purchased of me. Indeed, he checked out of the New Haven Bank his last dollar for books.

While pursuing the survey of the State, he purchased a horse, saddle, and saddle-bags for sixty dollars, and carried specimens and the tools to procure them in the saddle-bags. Story about his horse. His horse was used mainly to carry them. He told me that he rarely mounted him, and that, after a while, the horse would not even follow him with a bridle in hand; for he learned the peculiar character of his owner, and did as he pleased. "Finally," said Percival, "I used to get a big apple, place it in my hand behind me with the bridle, and, as the horse was fond of apples, he would follow while I walked on and thus induced him to advance." He related many incidents where the people refused to let him examine their lands. Several times he had dogs set upon him to draw him off. He often met men with divining-rods, and told how bewildered people became under the pressure of such folly.

In 1849 I employed him to make a prospecting survey for a railroad from New Haven, *via* Derby and Danbury, to Fishkill. Makes the survey for a railroad. He performed the work, aided by an assistant, and made a line report, designating the entire route by roads, houses, streams, etc., so that to this day there has never been any difficulty in recognizing his survey mile by mile; and it has been a constant

reference in subsequent surveys. On his return, he joined my family at the table three times, and, so far as I know, it was his first deviation from his long exclusion from the family circle or table. He appeared to enjoy the digression, and repeated it with seeming pleasure. On one of these occasions, he narrated to me his early days, including his residence with an uncle on Long Island, where, with other boys, he frolicked on the ice barefooted.

But once in my life did I see the inside of his rooms at the Hospital by daylight. This exposed his bed, which His rooms. was a single cot, clothed in the most primitive manner; books, papers, and maps formed the lining of the side walls and carpeted the floors. When about to be absent, he used to let me know it, and but for that, his rooms would several times have been broken into to ascertain if he were there and living.

About the year 1836 he became deeply interested in His music and German verses. German verse and music, and frequently spent hours after the closing of the store in reading to me German songs; and then having procured the music, would show me how beautifully the music harmonized with the words. Finally, he borrowed my accordion and learned to use it.* He would bring it back and run over

* Concerning his learning to use the accordion, the following story is told: "On another occasion, he remarked to a friend that he should like to get some cheap musical instrument with which to amuse himself occasionally; and after several had been suggested and objected to on various grounds, the accordion, then a comparatively new instrument, was mentioned. 'What,' said Percival, 'that affair like a bellows; can any music be got out of that?' On being assured that there could, the thing seemed to strike him favorably, and he procured one that same day. On the following day, toward night, his informant was passing the place where Percival had his rooms, and heard music of an unusual character. On inquiry, he learned that it

German airs, producing the most delicate and inaudible notes possible. The ear had to be exceedingly attentive, even when alone, to detect them. He also learned to use my flute and guitar, producing as before more delicate and perfect notes than were ever known to the instruments. He would also sing, though this too was almost inaudible. To enable me better to enjoy it, he would translate the German. This almost infatuation lasted some months.

He used to relate his hard experiences in life, but I cannot now recall them so as to relate the items with any accuracy. He used rarely to complain of his health. His frame was delicate, owing in part to his scanty mode of subsistence. His dislike to meet ladies was ^{Dislikes to} very great; he seemed to have no relish for ^{meet ladies.} their society, and in his conversations he expressed a loss of confidence.

At one time he had in preparation a new edition of his poems; new ones were written and old ones revised, but the work was never brought out.*

Had he been better understood, much more profit to the world would have resulted. He was kind, con- ^{Causes of} fiding, and easily persuaded, if properly handled. ^{his difficul-} ties.

To cross him by word or deed seemed to destroy his ambition or zeal for any professional or literary labor.

was Percival and the accordion. He had spent the whole night in the effort, and had mastered the instrument. 'Never,' said the person who relates the fact, 'have I before or since heard such music from an accordion.' " — *Putnam's Monthly*, December, 1856.

* In 1851 he had an application from an English publisher to print a complete edition in England; but for some reason nothing came of it, though there were frequent inquiries made both here and abroad, in this and succeeding years, for his poetry; and at times people even made applications to the poet himself to know how his volumes might be obtained.

When aiding Dr. Webster, the engagement was broken by differences of opinion, in consequence, as I then believed, of Percival's greater knowledge.

I knew him very well indeed, and shared his confidence to a very considerable extent ; but I find it difficult, with the lapse of time, to put it on record.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN NOYES.





CHAPTER XXI.

1853 - 1856.

GEOLOGICAL LABORS AT THE WEST. — LETTERS TO MR. HERRICK. — HIS HOUSE. — THE WISCONSIN SURVEY. — RELUCTANCE TO LEAVE NEW HAVEN. — LETTERS FROM HIS WESTERN FRIENDS. — HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH. — TRIBUTES TO HIS MEMORY.

DERCIVAL'S attention was now turned to the West. His numerous geological examinations, since his general survey of Connecticut, had called attention to him as a director and guide in mining interests; and his own love of geology, which began as early as 1815 and never abated, led him readily to accept of proposals for employment in these labors. He was frequently referred to as an authority in all the mines and ledges of his native State, and often made special investigations in the interest of private parties. In April, 1853, he was engaged by the Honorable ^{Geological} F. C. Phelps, President of the American Min- ^{labors at the} West. ing Company, to demonstrate the truth of certain theories concerning the lead mines in Illinois and Wisconsin. He succeeded in establishing the very important fact that the mineral extended several hundred feet below the surface of the earth; and it was thought that his investigations had added at least a million dollars to the value of that region. He also advised the use of machinery in the drainage of the mineral lands. The following letters (extracts) ^{Letters to} addressed to the late Edward C. Herrick, in ^{Mr. Herrick,}

whom he placed every confidence, give some glimpses of his life at the West:—

TO EDWARD C. HERRICK.

HAZEL GREEN, WISCONSIN, August 1, 1853.

DEAR SIR,—

. . . . I *do* think I am in the way of determining the system of arrangement in the mines, and I have had to do it with very little possible aid from former publications. I have no hesitation in saying that the arrangement of the ores is here as regular as in any mine I have ever examined. I have found something new and peculiar in every mine I have entered; and yet all conform to one general law,—unity with great variety. I should be pleased to write you a longer letter,—on the country, its scenery, resources, people, their character, peculiarities, etc., but I have now little time. When I receive your answer, I will endeavor to write at greater length. I will just give you a touch of the mining lan-
The mining dialect. guage: “I was staked on a prospect, and after prospecting several days I struck a lead and raised a lot of bully mineral, but it was only a bunch in a chimney, without any opening; so I petered out, and a sucker jumped me.” This is truly a rich and beautiful country. Besides its vast mineral resources, it is rich in surface and subsoil, the last peculiar to the mining region, and beautiful exceedingly, whether broken woodland or rolling prairie.

Yours very truly,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

TO EDWARD C. HERRICK.

HAZEL GREEN, WISCONSIN, October 21, 1853.

DEAR SIR, —

Yours of the 12th was received this morning, and I now take the first opportunity of reply. I was very successfully and actively engaged in my explorations, with health apparently improving as the weather grew cooler, till Wednesday, September 28th, when I was suddenly attacked with a chill, on issuing from a mine on a cold raw day; which attack ended in a severe bilious remittent, which my physician (Dr. Jenckes of this place) has informed me placed me for some days in a state of great danger. I was engaged, at the attack, about eight or ten miles east of here, in the vicinity of Fever River, in the neighborhood of which I had been employed nearly four weeks, where the people have suffered much this season from intermittents. I had been very laboriously, and, as I thought, successfully employed; and, at my attack, had increased the number of my entries into mines to one hundred and twenty. On Monday I had been out all day in mines and on surface explorations, without refreshment, and rode home several miles, thinly clad, in the evening, against a chilly south wind. Tuesday I felt a general soreness, but was actively employed near Fever River till late in the evening. The next morning I went out to my day's work, and about ten, A. M., was attacked as I have stated above. I remained till Saturday, October 1st, without medical attendance, from my remote situation, although in a very kind and attentive family, and unfortunately attempted to manage my own case, which I treated with an emetic and cathartic till I

had reduced myself too far. Dr. Jenckes then attended me; and on Tuesday, October 4th, I was removed to his house here, which for a few days increased my danger, but I have fortunately recovered, although I have convalesced but slowly. I however think I shall commence work again next week, although with due attention to avoid too much fatigue and exposure. The weather during my illness has been remarkably fine, and is so still, — a rich and pleasant Indian summer. I regret to have lost so much fair weather, particularly as I was going ahead so well, but must submit to the inevitable. I hope still to be able to accomplish this season the most important objects I have in view.

With regard to the principal subject of your letter, the purchase of the lot held by Mr. Stone, I am First step toward his house. hardly prepared to state my opinion decisively. If the plan of building proposed by Mr. Stone could be carried through, I should wish to appropriate as much of my means as possible to aid in it. I left in the Savings' Bank, in your care, \$160. You have received on my account, since I have come here, \$266 and \$141.15, = \$407.15, — in all, in your care, \$567.15. I have with me here about \$70. Mr. Phelps has written that he expected to employ me a long time, from his satisfaction with my labors. The Honorable Truman Smith offered me employment just after I engaged with the American Company; and on my stating to him my engagement, wrote me to inform him when I had completed it, that he might furnish me *permanent* employment. I will state to An effort to have him State Geologist. you, in confidence, that a proposition has been made to me through my friends, from some of the leading men in this State (Wisconsin), to engage in a survey of the State. Such are my present

means and apparent prospects. I wish to secure a place where my property may be secure and out of the way of others. . . . If there is no prospect of completing the building so as to furnish a refuge for my property, it might not be proper to employ my means in purchasing the lot; but if my friends would be induced, by my making the purchase, to carry the project through, I would for myself consent. Under the circumstances, I will leave the subject to your judgment and prudence, and give you liberty, if you think it best, to employ my funds in your charge in that way, trusting that you will take all the necessary securities. . . .

I remain very sincerely yours,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

Under date "Platteville, November 13, 1853," he writes that he had recovered his health and resumed his employment, — journeying with a man connected with the mines, — and then adds: —

We started so late yesterday that we rode some part of the way, and the air was so smoky from prairie fires that I could see but a short distance. We, however, crossed some extensive, open, rolling prairies, of rich black soil, a considerable part ebony black from recent fires, the rest brown, and stripped of the splendid robe of golden and purple flowers which covered them through the summer and early autumn. As we approached this place we had a brilliant view of two extensive fires, one advancing on the prairie in a line of one to two ^{Prairie fires.} miles, — slowly before a fresh west wind, in a front of detached dancing flames, with open intervals, like the squadrons of an army, leaving a black waste behind them; the other climbing the southwest slope of the northwest

Platte Mound, close by here, in the same detached manner from base to summit; both after dark rising with increased splendor, and throwing on the hazy sky a mimic aurora with the same black arch below that we see in the real aurora. It was a sight "for sair e'en," as the Scotch say. I have lately seen at Hazel Green remarkable evening exhibitions of prairie fires. In one instance the whole northern horizon was illuminated with distant fires, giving the closest resemblance of a northern light of moderate elevation. Another night the east or southeast horizon was bounded by a line of clearly visible fires, in similar detached masses to those of last evening, swaying like waves over the long prairie ridges which the next running wave made all blackened. At the same time a faint reflection in the southwest showed an extensive fire in Iowa, beyond the highlands adjoining the west bank of the Mississippi, where about that time much damage was caused by fires to farms, as I was informed by one who had since left there. Great efforts are made on such occasions to keep the fires from the farms and groves, and ordinarily, from what I saw yesterday, I should think there was little risk from them, their progress is so slow. The temptation offered by the greatly improved pastures of the next season will long keep up these fires. I have thought these statements might interest you, but must now conclude with the assurance of my best regards to you and my friends. From illness and a few accidents in mines I have perhaps escaped narrowly, but I trust I shall again see Connecticut.

Yours truly,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

TO EDWARD C. HERRICK.

GALENA, ILLINOIS, December 9, 1853.

DEAR SIR, —

Since I last wrote you from Platteville, November 13, I have been constantly employed in travelling, exploring, and writing. I have heard nothing from you since my two last letters to you. I am now uncertain what course I shall take this winter, whether to ^{Uncertain what to do} for the winter. return East, or to go South to Missouri and Arkansas and return in the spring. Next week the question will doubtless be decided; when, if it is concluded to go South, I will again write you and send a draft for the amount then due me. If I return to you, I shall be my own messenger. I write this merely to let you know where I am, and to inform you that I am in good health again.

Yours very truly,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL.

In a letter to Mr. Herrick, bearing date "Hazel Green, Wisconsin, December 23, 1853," he speaks of an excursion, now that the cold weather prevented his mineral explorations:—

To Missouri, Arkansas, and the Cherokee country, to return to New York by Tennessee and North Carolina, and perhaps northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama. I shall have an opportunity to see a great extent of country, and to make many important observations. . . . I have thought the objects in view sufficient to warrant the step I have taken, and hope it will meet your approval. . . . I wish you to renew the insurance on my books from my funds, and to see that they, as well as my

A proposed excursion.

other property, do not suffer injury. I shall be so much on the move, that I cannot designate any place at which you may direct to me. I expect to be on my journey round to New York at least three months, perhaps four. I shall as soon as possible, on my return, meet you at New Haven, and hope to find things safe. I have still expectation of an offer here for further employment, as I have hinted to you.

I am very desirous to have an opportunity of thoroughly exploring this lead region, and I think, from His interest in the lead region. what I have already done, that I might lay down its arrangement with a good degree of precision, and to the benefit of the public. I think I have secured here some influential friends, and gained a good opinion among the miners. I have found these throughout civil and attentive, and retain of them a grateful remembrance. My visit to Missouri, to which I shall proceed across Iowa, by Iowa City and Jefferson City, will enable me to connect this lead region with that of Missouri, and perhaps to combine the lead in one consistent whole. If I should not return, which is possible, I wish you to stand in my place, and to see that all that concerns me is settled as fairly as possible. I cannot conclude without expressing my strong sense of the kind attentions Dr. Jenckes a brother to him. I have received from Dr. Jenckes and his lady (daughter of the late Rev. Hugh Smith, D. D., of New York), who, during my illness and convalescence and since, have treated me as a brother.

Yours very truly,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL:

His friends, acting in accordance with his authority, had purchased a lot on Park Place, south of George Street, in New Haven, and had made some preparations for building before he returned home. It seemed ^{Progress of his house.}

desirable, as old age came upon him, that he should have a suitable home, where, amid his books, he might spend his time in quiet, calm enjoyment; and his fair prospects now made such a step safe. On his return, he drafted the plan for his house, and again took up his residence at the Hospital. His friends made the contracts and saw that they were executed. The design was a house ^{The plan.}

of one story, with high walls, the front part of which was to be used for a library and study, and the rear for a sleeping apartment and bachelor's kitchen. The entrance was also in the rear. The front was broken by three narrow and high windows, to which heavy iron blinds were attached. The house was built of stone and painted a dark brown. It was made fire-proof, and, as I remember it, certainly resembled a monastic cell more than the residence of a human being. The poet saw its walls rising under his own eyes, during his stay at the East, but he never occupied it. It was completed in November, 1854, and his library was packed away in boxes by his own hands preparatory to a removal, when he was again called back to his new-found friends at the West. As showing how one poet invests the home of another with romantic beauty, the following passage from the pen of N. P. Willis, though he is mistaken in thinking that Percival ever lived there, is a charming tribute of genius to genius:—

“New Haven is a vast cathedral, with aisles for streets; . . . and Percival, the poet, I fancy has felt ^{A tribute from N. P. Willis.} this in designing the cottage in which he lives.

It looks like a sarcophagus in a cathedral aisle. Three blind windows on the front of a square structure are the only signs of anything ever going in or coming out of it, the door being in the rear, I believe, and no sign of life visible in the streets. I felt my heart kneel in passing it. 'He (Percival) is, I am sure, the purest and most mere man of genius possible to our race; profound science and lofty poetry straining his soul to the two extremes of a seraph's span, with scarcely mortality enough to keep him down to the ground. When his struggling spirit shakes off this little hindrance to his wings, — the visible shape by which we know him, — the ashes might properly be preserved in the sarcophagus he here built and pre-tenanted.' It is too bad to be compelled to add that what would have been the shrine of genius for coming time has given place to an elegant dwelling with all the modern innovations and improvements.

The people of Wisconsin were not idle when they saw the great practical results from the survey of the lead region for the American Mining Company. In the year 1853, a law was passed providing for a geological survey of the State, to continue for four years, at an annual expense of twenty-five hundred dollars. Under this law, Mr. Edward Daniels was appointed State Geologist, early in 1853, and entered upon the duties of his office. He was a young man and quite enthusiastic in his profession; but many of those interested in mining felt anxious that the survey should be conducted by Percival, believing that if made by one so competent and of such practical experience it would be of very great benefit to the State. In this opinion Mr. Daniels also agreed, and a request was then made to Governor Barstow to give the appointment to Percival.

Steps to the
survey of
Wisconsin.

This was the signal for a good deal of party invective upon the Governor, but no newspaper dared to question the propriety of the appointment in regard to Percival's ability. When it was communicated to him by Governor Barstow, he was much inclined not to accept it. He had learned to value anew his books and the repose among his friends, and it was hard to summon the courage to go away at his age and leave them for an uncertain length of time. It was plainly evident, to those who loved him best, that he must engage in such an employment or be unwillingly dependent upon the kindness of others. They urged him hard to go, so much so, that he even suspected their motives, and with one most intimate friend he was actually offended because of his seeming unkindness in urging him to leave his home. He loved his books, and the delightful leisure of the scholar never was more fascinating. He lingered and lingered, and finally was almost forced away. Yet he went among those who learned to love him tenderly, and who, in the end, bestowed upon him and his memory every mark of kindness and respect. In the able and pathetic eulogy which Mr. E. A. Calkins delivered before the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, on the announcement of Percival's death, he gave a graphic sketch of his appearance when he first came among them. Even the picture of his poverty is touched with pathos:—

“The most of us that knew Dr. Percival did not know him till he came to the West. He was then far past his prime. He walked with his head bent, his eye cast downward, and with slow and uncertain step. Those of our citizens who often saw him will not soon forget his aspect of poverty, almost of squalor,—

his tattered gray coat, his patched pants (the repairs the work of his own hands), and his weather-beaten glazed cap, with ear-pieces of sheep-skin, the woolly side in. The frontier inhabitants of the State knew him familiarly as Old Stonebreaker."

When once again among the Western people, every attention was shown him; and though at times there were rumors that his appointment might be revoked, which disturbed him, they arose not from any distrust or want of confidence in the geologist, but from attempts to raise partisan issues against the Governor. The history of his labors upon the survey is best given in the Introductions which he himself prepared to his Annual Reports. The Report for 1855 contained the following introductory statement, addressed to Governor Barstow, who stood by him as a true friend during the entire period of the survey:—

TO HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM A. BARSTOW,
Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

In presenting this Report on the geology of Wisconsin, it is proper that I should state the circumstances under which the materials for it have been collected. On receiving my commission as State Geologist (August 12, 1854), I proceeded, agreeably to your instructions, to examine the mineral district included in the southwestern counties of the State. It was my intention, in this examination, to make a preliminary reconnaissance of the entire district, so as to enable me to present, in my first Report, a general view of the arrangement, both as exhibited on the surface and in the interior. In previous examinations of the same kind, I had found

His own
sketch of his
labors upon
the survey.

the great advantage of such general views, in preparing for a more just appreciation of particular facts and of their mutual relations. One of the most important objects of a geological survey, indeed the most important, is to determine the system of arrangement, and the principles connected therewith, which may serve as a guide through what would be otherwise an inextricable labyrinth. This cannot be done satisfactorily without a minute and thorough investigation of particulars; but this should be made throughout with a view to the entire arrangement, and for this purpose a preliminary reconnoissance is required. Although I lost no time in pursuing this object, yet I found it impossible to visit the entire district this season, and November 23d I returned to Madison, and after a brief examination of the country between that place and Janesville, in reference to the strata, I applied myself to the preparation of my Report.

I have visited, during this season, all the considerable diggings from the south line of the State to a line drawn from east to west, north of Cassville, Beetown, Potosi, Platteville, Mineral Point, Yellow Stone, and Exeter, and from the Mississippi to the east part of Green County. Some of the less important diggings, within these limits, may have escaped my notice, but I have endeavored to make such an examination of those I have visited as my limited time would allow. I have also employed, in preparing this Report, such facts as I had collected the former year, in the employment of the American Mining Company (New York), in exploring different localities in the same district, and particularly in examining the different strata, in reference to the probable descent of the mineral through them. On this point, of so much importance to

the mining interest, I had then ascertained a series of facts, which seemed to prove that all the limestones, from the surface of the upper magnesian to a considerable depth, at least, in the lower magnesian, were good lead-bearing rocks. My researches, this year, have enabled me to add many convincing proofs to what I had before ascertained, the whole showing a regular descent of the mineral through all the rocks, within the limits above indicated, except the upper sandstone. I have had no opportunity, this season, of extending my researches in the lower magnesian, its out-crop occurring chiefly in the northern part of the district, which I have not yet visited. I had, the former year, also applied myself to the investigation of other points of much economical interest, and have made them, this season, leading objects in my survey. Such are the surface arrangement of the ranges, by which they are combined into different groups, which are themselves also arranged in connected series, showing a regular system of arrangement apparently pervading the whole district, so far as I have yet examined it; the vein character of the different deposits of mineral, recognizable in all their varied modifications; and the different character of the openings in the different limestone strata, showing that while all of these are lead-bearing, yet that each presents some peculiarities in the arrangement and character of its mineral deposits. The facts which I have thus far collected on these points appear not a little encouraging, as exhibiting regularity and order in arrangement, and striking analogies to the best mines in corresponding situations in Europe. The opportunities for examining the interior of mines are not now as frequent as I could have wished, but I have improved every opportunity which has presented, and have

been able, during the two seasons, to examine the interior of more than two hundred different mines, of varied extent from the smallest to the greatest.

From the short time that I have been employed by the State, it cannot be expected that I should prepare a complete Report. In this, I have had in view the immediate interests of the mineral district, and I have endeavored to give it a practical bearing. My object has been to give general views of more immediate importance, and rather to point out the method I design to pursue than to give the results of a survey. Local details, and such as have no direct bearing on my present object, are reserved to another occasion.

I have confined myself, in preparing this Report, chiefly to my own observations, and have proceeded no further than the facts, which I have myself collected, would seem to warrant. Although I have not yet been able to explore the whole mineral district, and may therefore have failed to ascertain some facts which may have an important bearing in determining the entire arrangement, yet I have felt warranted, from what I have already ascertained, in stating with some confidence the conclusions to which I have already alluded.

The mineral district is of such relative extent, its resources, mineral and agricultural, are so great, that whatever interests that must largely interest the whole State. The act, making the appropriation for this survey, requires that that district should be first surveyed; but occasional opportunities may, in the mean while, be taken to examine such other points as may be of immediate importance. The survey of the whole State must be the work of time; to be valuable, it should be made deliberately, and as far as possible in a connected order. As long as I am in-

trusted with this object, I shall endeavor to give it such a direction, and particularly to make it contribute to develop the great resources of the State.

Very respectfully,

JAMES G. PERCIVAL,

State Geologist.

In the early spring of 1855 he made a brief visit to New Haven to see the new home which was awaiting his return, and to arrange his private affairs. The rumors already alluded to of party dissatisfaction, the seeming uncertainty whether his appointment would be continued by the next Legislature, though in the minds of the greater part of the people no such rumors or uncertainty existed, had their weight upon his sensitive mind; and it cost him a harder struggle to return than when he went out on first receiving his appointment. With the increase of age, and he was now nearly sixty, came an increased attachment to home. That home, which had now been built and prepared for him, was ready to be occupied. There may have been before him the dim, slight foreboding that he might not live to return. He was depressed and wept like a child to think that positive engagements must call him away, and that the coveted retreat and solitude could not now be his; yet he at length reluctantly departed, never again to travel in solitary walk the familiar streets of the city which he loved.

His homesickness, however, did not prevent him from engaging, when again in Wisconsin, in the labors which he loved, and to which so large a part of his life was devoted. He resumed them with all his former ardor, and continued in them till the 8th of De-

A brief visit
to New
Haven.

He weeps on
leaving his
new home.

Again busy
upon the
survey.

ember, 1855, when he sat down to the writing of his Annual Report to be presented to the next Legislature. This he was unable to complete before sickness overtook him, and he was compelled to lay aside the pen, the hammer, and all the implements of work for the long rest which precedes the resurrection. The Introduction, addressed to Governor Bashford, was completed; the Report itself was unfinished, though he made every effort, even in sickness, to complete it. It should be said of both these Reports that they are written in quite a different vein from his Geological Survey of Connecticut; more practical, containing far less of simply descriptive geology, and entering with considerable minuteness into the determination of the numerous questions which arose during the survey, of which in its later stages the Introduction presents a very complete synopsis. One or two passages have a personal bearing.

He remarks:—

“The winter (1854–55) had been employed in preparing and attending to the publication of my last Report; and after a short visit to the East, which my private affairs rendered necessary, I recommenced my explorations early in April. I first visited the iron-mines at Iron Ridge, Dodge County, and at Hartford, Washington County, and at Marston, on the Little Baraboo, Sauk County, examining also such other objects of interest as occurred on my route. After this excursion, I recommenced (May 1st) the examination of the lead districts, left unfinished the former season, and completed it June 30th. I have employed the remainder of the season, till December 8th, in a reconnoissance of the State, for the purpose of forming a general idea of the geological arrangement. In so doing, I have aimed to

traverse as much of the State as possible ; and while the determination of the different strata and formations has been my leading object, I have improved every opportunity of visiting such localities as were of particular importance. I have visited, in this and my other pursuits, thirty-eight of the fifty counties in the State, all, indeed, except a few of the more northern and less settled counties. I first made a tour (July, August) through the northeastern counties as far as Sheboygan, Green Bay, and Stevens Point. I then proceeded (September, October) on an excursion through the western counties, north of the Wisconsin, as far as the Falls of St. Croix, and from the want of communication on the Wisconsin side, near the Mississippi, returned on the west side of that river, through Minnesota, from the St. Croix to La Crosse. During November, I made a tour through the southeastern counties, and thus have been able to take a general view of the largest and, at present, the most important part of the State.

“In making this general examination, I have not only had in view objects of direct geological interest, but also the agricultural capabilities of the surface, and have been agreeably surprised to find, in the more northern districts, but a small extent not capable of improvement.”

For the remainder of this biography I am indebted to the excellent letters of his Western friends, Mr. Edward M. Hunter, Mr. Lyman C. Draper, and J. L. Jenckes, M. D., to whom the poet has already expressed himself as warmly attached, and to whom he gave every testimony of love, in not only appointing him his executor, but also in making him the sole inheritor of his estate. With Mr. Hunter he was on very familiar terms, and he has happily succeeded in

The letters of
his Western
friends.

Mr. Hunter's
letter.

giving a living picture of Percival as he went in and out among his friends at the West.

TO THE EDITOR.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, June 25, 1865.

DEAR SIR, —

I shall never forget my first introduction to Dr. Percival. His appointment had been determined upon ^{First intro-} for some time previous by Governor Barstow ; ^{duction.} and as Professor Daniels had to be removed to make way for him, it was made the occasion for violent partisan attacks by the opposition press, which, to their credit be it said, they were all subsequently heartily ashamed of. Mr. S. M. Booth, who was then the editor of the Free Democrat at Milwaukee, and the active and able leader of the at that time inchoate Republican party in Wisconsin, had been one of the friends of the Doctor who strongly urged his appointment. The small anteroom which all old settlers will so well remember opening to the Executive chamber, happened at the time to be occupied solely by myself, then private secretary. I opened the door of the sanctum to Mr. Booth, and scarcely gave a glance at the modest-looking, plainly dressed, and humble figure following his rapid step. Feeling at liberty to do so, I followed carelessly, and heard him say, "Governor Barstow, allow me to introduce to you Dr. Percival, your State Geologist," with a feeling in which astonishment first predominated. This could not be the James G. Percival whose poems I had read with so much delight, and who ranked among the most able men of the time? But so it was ; within that simple and unpretending figure was con-

tained more intellectual wealth and solid knowledge than the world could then boast of possessing in any other one of the great men whom it was the privilege of our time to claim. It became my happiness to meet the Doctor often afterwards ; and our relations were such that I became more familiar with him than almost any other person connected at that time with the capitol. It is needless to say that the interest and profound regard I felt for him increased from day to day, as my knowledge of his wonderful resources of learning and native kindliness of heart developed themselves to me.

As an instance of the astonishing power of his memory, I will cite one circumstance. You have Instances of his power of memory. his Geological Report for the year 1855. He wrote this, to my knowledge, without ever having made a single memorandum to assist his recollection of the many and complicated details which are embodied in the Report. It is safe to assert that, as a mere effort of memory, it has seldom been surpassed, and furnishes us a clew by which we can understand how he acquired those wonderful stores of learning he had treasured up. By the order of Governor Barstow a small room had been partitioned off for his use, over a building erected for the storing of wood in the rear of the capitol, in order to prevent any exposure, on his part, to the damps of the lower rooms of the main building, which were all then which could be used for any such purpose. Here, with no other materials than pen, ink, and paper, he wrote out from memory the Report I have mentioned. Should you give a condensed statement of what is contained in this Report, it will be difficult for your readers to realize how any man could retain in his memory the vast amount of material he has so luminously placed upon record. His

second Report was written, as near as my memory serves me, under the same circumstances; but I am not clear as to the fact. After the first Report was issued from the press, all of the partisan opposition, which had until that time followed upon his appointment, ceased entirely. The great merits of the man then began to be appreciated, and the members of the Legislature of all parties acquiesced in the propriety of his appointment. I have heretofore sent you a poem in the German language which he wrote at the oft-repeated solicitations of Mr. August Krüer, then State Librarian, and the editor of the Wisconsin Staats Zeitung, published at the capital. When the Doctor was in the building, and not in the Executive room, he could be safely looked for in the library. This piece of poetry was written in a minute or two one afternoon, while he was in the room under charge of Mr. Krüer, and apparently as much to get rid of his solicitation and secure himself from further annoyance as from any other motive. As one of the latest, if not the last, effort * of his poetical genius, it may be of some interest to such as value the memory of the writer.

I became, as I stated, comparatively intimate with him; and often when I was alone in the office, he would enter in his quiet and subdued manner and stand by my desk by the hour, — I very seldom could induce him to sit, — and from the rich stores of his mind, on whatever subject I could succeed in getting him to speak, hold me a willing captive, perfectly enchanted, until some one would dissolve the spell by entering the room; when the Doctor would drop his head, become instantly silent, and glide away.

* Page 455.

I succeeded once in securing the Doctor's acceptance of an invitation to take dinner with me, and had An invitation to dinner. prepared those with whom I was residing for a rich treat. I did not understand his peculiarities then so well as perhaps I should. He came at the appointed hour, but the treat I had promised was furnished in monosyllables. He ate of what was placed before him sparingly, replied as briefly as possible to the questions addressed to and intended to draw him out, and at the earliest possible moment consistent with good breeding placed his old cap, which in its best estate could not have cost over half a dollar, upon his head, and took his departure in the humble manner peculiar to him. I never invited him to dine with me again, for I saw that it cost him a painful effort, and that he had obliged me by doing so simply out of a feeling of politeness. He was remarkably temperate, but I succeeded once, and only once, by praising highly and insisting upon his tasting some Port wine which I had stored away and intended for visitors, in inducing him to drink a glass. The effect was magical. There was another gentleman with me, Mr. G. P. R. James, the novelist. and, if my memory serves me aright, it was Mr. James, the novelist, who was then visiting Madison; and this was the only occasion when I was not alone with him that he conversed freely and without restraint. Some rich specimens of iron ore from Lake Superior, which had just been forwarded to the Executive office, furnished me a subject for his attention, and he commenced speaking about the mines of that metal in this country and in Europe, and from that was led to a discourse upon those of greater intrinsic value; and although one of his auditors knew very little more about the subjects than I did of the Sanscrit, yet he held us

willing and most attentive listeners for more than an hour, by the charm of his style and language, together with the ease with which he made me, at least, in my ignorance, comprehend what he desired to inform us of. If I am right in my recollection that the other person present was Mr. James, you will understand the high compliment his close attention and silence implied, as he was possessed of remarkable conversational powers, and was very apt to monopolize, himself, the attention of those with whom he chose to converse. I remember one statement the Doctor made casually in the course of his remarks, although not exactly germane to the subject, and which subsequent investigation and experience have substantiated the correctness of, and that was that there was no coal ^{No coal in Wisconsin.} in Wisconsin, and that it was impossible any should ever be found save in what are called "pockets," — accidental deposits which have drifted away from other sections where it is found in strata; and the reason he assigned was that the whole State was below the coal formation, although in our neighboring State of Illinois vast beds of bituminous coal are found. Many of our people, in different parts of Wisconsin, have been seized lately with the petroleum fever, and have been boring the earth and the public; but the Doctor's theory yet holds good, and the only oil we have here is the imported article.

It is unnecessary for me to state to you, who must have known him well, that the Doctor was very pe- ^{A peculiarity illustrated.} culiar. I shall never forget one circumstance over which I have often laughed since. Governor Barstow, who had a sincere regard for him, had associated with him, in the survey, the Rev. A. C. Barry of Racine, who, added to his other accomplishments, was a geologist

of fair standing, for the purpose of aiding the Doctor in some of the more toilsome parts of his duty, and also to care for and see that no untoward accident should befall him. An old man had then been recently murdered in his own wagon for a small sum of money in his possession by a ruffian, who had induced his victim to ride along with him, and this was the chief reason which induced his Excellency to add Mr. Barry to the commission. This was not to detract from the Doctor's salary, however. Governor Barstow paid the sum which was to be due the assistant, if I recollect aright, out of the contingent fund allowed him by the Legislature. As it happened, Mr. Barry could not, for some reason, accompany his principal at the appointed time, but sent his son, who had attained some smattering of the science, and was then not over seventeen years of age, in his stead. Governor Barstow left for the East within a short time after the Doctor and his young assistant started on their tour through the northern part of the State. Two weeks may have elapsed, when one afternoon, much to my surprise, the Doctor entered the office. After the usual greetings, and a considerable hesitation on his part, he broke out with, "Mr. Hunter, I cannot continue any longer with that young man, indeed I cannot." I inquired what was the difficulty. "Sir," said he in reply, and he exhibited more nervous agitation than I had ever observed in him before, "he annoys me excessively." I hastened to assure him that, if such was the case, I would discharge the young man, so that he might proceed alone if he preferred to do so. He appeared to be very much relieved and thanked me warmly. I then inquired in what respect his assistant had proved derelict. He replied with a degree of solemnity, "Sir, he *whistles*, he

throws stones at birds, and he speaks to people with whom we meet on the road; indeed, I cannot go with him any longer." It is needless to state that the Doctor recommenced his scientific wanderings minus his assistant, whose geological researches among the pebble-stones annoyed him so much. This circumstance shows how completely his mind was absorbed by the subject he was pursuing. He could not bear to be interrupted in his train of thought by the trifling of a boy, as any one who has perused his Report, and knows that it was written entirely from memory, can readily understand.

One day the mail brought us the laws of New Mexico, which were printed in the Spanish language. The Doctor was standing by my desk, as I tore off the cover, and handing it to him, I remarked carelessly, "You understand Spanish, I believe, Doctor?" "O yes, sir," he replied, "I read and teach the Spanish, as well as the other modern languages of Europe. I also understand most of the dialects of the European tongues. I know those of the German and also six of the Slavonic." This was said as artlessly as a child, and without any appearances or thought of boasting.

We had some specimens of iron ore in the Executive office from Lake Superior. I happened to know where the range was from which the specimens were taken, and mentioned the fact to the Doctor. He said, "In case you can secure any of this land, Mr. Hunter, I would advise you to do so. This ore is as much better than the best Norway ore as that is superior to the common New Jersey." I have often regretted that I did not take his advice. Other matters drove it out of my mind, and when I looked again for the bird, it had flown.

One of the peculiarities for which the Doctor was re-

markable was his affection for the wretched old horse he was in the habit of driving around the State, and to which I have always attributed his death.

His affection
for his horse
the cause of
his death.

Governor Barstow and others of his friends—and he had many without seeking them — were anxious that he should remain in Madison, where they could watch over his health, which was so evidently frail. He consented to this after he had made arrangements with a gentleman living at Hazel Green, in whom he had confidence, to take care of his horse. It was a most unfortunate occurrence that this gentleman was taken sick, and the Doctor would trust his horse, which was not certainly worth above a hundred dollars, to no one else. This was the cause of his leaving Madison and of his death. It was useless to attempt to persuade him that some other person would devote as much care to the horse as the gentleman in whom he reposed his confidence. I had a hurried interview with him in the office. He came in and seemed quite excited ; told me that he was obliged to go to Hazel Green to take care of his horse, that our mutual acquaintance there was sick, and he could trust no one else to look after his horse. I recollect now that I was busy about something in the office, and stopped but for a moment to stare at the Doctor, and promised all kinds of good care and attention for the animal, in case he would bring him to Madison and remain there himself, where we could look after his health. He seemed to be in haste, and would not do more than shake hands and say good by. This was the last time I ever saw him.

I once tempted the Doctor as a speculator, and failed signally. There was a man who pretended to know all about minerals, who came to me at the time he was going over the State, and informed me

A specula-
tion.

that, in case he could find any considerable quantity of the calamine of zinc ore, fortunes would be little less than the amount of the national debt of England. Zinc paint was in demand. Calamine of zinc was the basis, and Dr. Percival could probably tell where there was a mine or two. I can see the sad smile with which he greeted the enthusiastic proposition I made to him in the words of my friend, as he said, "That is nothing but Black Jack, as the miners call it, Mr. Hunter, and there are many shiploads of it lying at the mouth of the mines." I never inquired any further about the calamine of zinc; and the last I saw of my metallic confederate, he was finding fault with the national administration for disregarding his meritorious claims to office. And this recalls another circumstance connected with his survey, ^{His integrity of character.} which I had forgotten. Presuming upon my position and the qualified intimacy existing between us, I asked him one day, before he set out on his northern trip, if he would not inform me, when he returned, in case he should find any, where the strongest indications of copper were. He paused a moment, and looking at me with his speaking eyes, remarked, "No, I cannot do so. I do not think it would be right; when my Report is ready for the printer, I will think of it." I did not consider the proposition wrong when I made it, but I felt abashed before the perfect uprightness which dictated the answer.

EDWARD M. HUNTER.

TO THE EDITOR.

MADISON, WISCONSIN, March 9, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR, —

. . . . When Percival first came to Madison, in August, 1854, Governor Barstow desired me to make his acquaintance, I having a quiet retreat and something of a library. During the succeeding winter, particularly, he spent many hours, I might say many hours a day, more or less, every week with me; and he shrank so much from ceremony, that I told him always to come in without ringing the bell or waiting to be shown to my study. Thus he would quietly come, sometimes saying in his soft, half-suppressed voice, "Mr. Draper, I have come to-day to look over some of your New York papers, — not to talk." On such occasions I soon learned it was useless to try to draw him into conversation. He would make a "Yes" or "No" reply, and pore over the papers. He always appeared to read with the greatest interest the foreign news, and sometimes some European item would serve to recall some geographical locality he had studied thoroughly, and he would lay down the paper, and despite his protest originally that he did not come to talk, he would give a deeply interesting narrative of everything connected with the locality or country, the people, their habits, peculiarities, etc. At other times, upon entering the room he would say, "Mr. Draper, I have come to unbend my mind to-day, if you have leisure, — not to talk"; and then for hours would follow some of those wonderful conversational displays, generally relating to science, often to geology, so peculiar to him. I have met many of our learned Americans, but it seems

to me Dr. Percival was the most profound and varied of them all.

It was during one of these visits, that I said to him, "You seem to love to converse about science, geography, history, travel, but I am not a little surprised that you never allude to a subject I should naturally think you would delight to dwell upon,—poetry. Why this silence, Doctor?" I had previously tried, in some quiet, unobtrusive way, to introduce the subject of his poetry, but he invariably evaded it. He now replied that he regretted ever having published any poetry; that he felt conscious that in many departments of science he could have been useful, perhaps even have excelled, but the fact that he was a poet was always against him, and it would be said, "His opinion of this or that subject is of no weight; he is not the man for this enterprise, or that position; *he is nothing but a madcap poet.*" And thus he said he had never accomplished in life what he would otherwise have done, and seemed to regard his life measurably a failure on this account, and this alone. He then roused up from this gloomy picture, and related the following incident. He said that while making his geological exploration of the lead region of Western Wisconsin, in the autumn of 1854, he chanced to seek a night's entertainment at a house in the country. He hitched his horse and went into the humble dwelling. The man of the house was out attending to his evening duties, but would soon be in; but before he came, upon announcing his name, a little child wished to know if he was the man who wrote poetry. Satisfied on this point, the little one stood up proudly and repeated one of his own poems which he had learned for school declamation. Dr. Percival, in relating the incident to me,

His confession in regard to poetry.

A surprise.

said that it both gratified and affected him, the more so that it should have happened where he could little have expected it, in the far-off regions of the West.

I remember once showing him a newspaper, and calling his attention to an anecdote there related of him, An anecdote explained. in substance, I think, that he was persuaded on some occasion to attend a select party of literary persons, and was importuned to sing a song. The result was, he began it in so low and soft a tone, and was so completely overcome with the emotion it produced on himself, that little or nothing was heard by his friends. When he read it, I asked him, perhaps not very directly, if it was so. He smiled sweetly, as he often did (I never knew him to laugh), and shook his head in denial.

He wanted a quiet boarding-place. There was then a widow lady residing here, who had been many Another peculiarity. years a successful teacher of young ladies, and had a high admiration of Dr. Percival and his poetry. She kept a few boarders, and he went there. One day the lady happened to dress her little boy in his presence. It so shocked him that he immediately left and chose a new home.

I remember once sounding him on his religious faith. His religious faith. His reply was not very definite, — in substance that he was not altogether orthodox. He left the impression upon my mind that he probably coincided in sentiment mainly with the Unitarians. I wish I could recall the incidents, but I cannot.

Very truly yours,

LYMAN C. DRAPER,

Cor. Sec. Wis. Hist. Society.

TO ERASMUS D. NORTH.

HAZEL GREEN, WISCONSIN, December 27, 1856.

DEAR SIR, —

You requested, in your last letter, that I would furnish you with some particulars of Percival's life while at the West; which I should have done ere this, had not my time been so much occupied. I first became acquainted with him in the spring of 1853. The following October I was called to attend him professionally as a physician. I found him quite ill with muco-enteritis and intermittent fever. I requested that he should be brought to my house, as it would be difficult for me to attend him at such a distance from home, it being eight or ten miles. After his arrival, he was confined to his bed about three weeks. A part of this time his recovery seemed doubtful; but as soon as his disease was subdued, he improved rapidly, and during the winter was favored with excellent health. At this period he seemed to enjoy life exceedingly, and to take great interest in all that pertained to this mining region. The first year he passed in Wisconsin he was employed by the American Mining Company. The succeeding year he was appointed by Governor Barstow, State Geologist, through the influence of the prominent citizens of the lead-mining region of Wisconsin, who petitioned the Governor to that effect. He was actively engaged in the survey of the State until within a short period of his death. His first Report was published in February, 1855. His second, which he nearly completed, will probably be issued next month. He visited every county with the exception of Douglass, which borders on Lake Superior.

Dr. Jenckes's
letter. A
general
sketch of his
Western life.

I have heard him estimate the distance he had travelled in his buggy, — which, I think, was nearly or quite six thousand miles. He was seldom absent from home longer than a month at a time; usually after that period, he would return to recruit for a few days. Occasionally, while travelling, he met with parties of the Among the Indian tribes. Chippewa and Winnebago tribes. His intercourse with them was, as he stated, unusually interesting. Alone in the forest with the red men, who were always friendly to him, he succeeded in learning something of their language and history. The language of the Chippewas he considered euphonious; that of the Winnebagoes, harsh and guttural. Yet, from his slight investigations of their two dialects, he thought they originally spoke one language.

Notwithstanding his labors at the West were arduous and almost incessant, while he was often exposed to the inclemencies of the weather and travelled through portions of the country sparsely settled, where there were many privations and but few conveniences of life, his three years in Wisconsin were, as he stated, the happiest period of his life.

Contented with the West. This portion of Wisconsin he held in high estimation, not only for its mineral and agricultural resources, but for its natural beauty and healthfulness. He frequently expressed a desire to purchase a beautiful farm within a mile of this village, where he fancied, in the care of his garden and in the companionship of his books, he could pass the remainder of his life pleasantly. Had he lived, I presume he would have carried his wish into effect. It would have rejoiced his friends could they have seen him at this time. Translated from the isolation of a lonely room to the happy

influences of a home, free from the immediate pressure of pecuniary want, surrounded by little children and a circle of friends by whom he was appreciated, but few would have recognized in the active, energetic, and social man the reserved Percival of other years. His affection for children, especially those he fancied, was frequently shown by his kind attention to their wants and great solicitude for their welfare. Many a time he took them in his buggy, and would ride two or three miles for their diversion, evidently enjoying himself as much as his little companions. His sincerity and childlike simplicity caused their attachment to be mutual. Music was his favorite recreation, for which he had an exquisite taste. Frequently he would spend hours in playing the accordion or piano. During the first two or three months of his last illness, he often sought the enjoyment and soothing influence of music.

His love for
children and
music.

His illness commenced soon after his return in December, 1855. A few weeks previous, while travelling, he had been exposed to severe weather, which doubtless injured him. He complained of indigestion and constipation of the bowels. Notwithstanding his ill health, he made great exertions to complete his Geological Report; but some time in the following March he was compelled to give up writing, and expressed a firm conviction that his disease would prove fatal. This conviction, he said, had gradually forced itself upon his mind. No efforts on the parts of his friends could change his views on this point. At this time, and indeed until a fortnight before his decease, his friends here had but little, if any, expectation that his case would prove alarming. I thought he was suffering from chronic dyspepsia, and that as soon as the severe cold weather had passed,

His illness.

and he could resume his active duties, he would recover. He was particular as to his diet, and his appetite remained unimpaired till within a few weeks of his death. During the last month he took but little nourishment, as it caused him much gastric distress. Coffee, however, he took with impunity throughout his sickness. There was not, at any time, fever or undue vascular excitement, and I could discover no indications of organic disease. As there were no marked symptoms in this anomalous case excepting indigestion and constipation, as I have stated, I found it difficult to form a satisfactory diagnosis. General physical debility and emaciation gradually increased until the end. Several times he remarked, "Since living at the West, I have overtaken my physical strength, and I feel that I am worn out." This last assertion expressed fully, I think, the cause of his sufferings and disease. When asked if he desired to recover, he replied, "The light of life is pleasant, but without health life is valueless." He was asked if, in the event of his death, he wished to be carried to New Haven. "No," His last hours. he said, "I wish to be buried here, and let my remains be undisturbed." He expressed no fears of the future. Occasionally we saw him on his knees, engaged in prayer. Two or three weeks before he died, he would frequently exclaim, "My God! my God!" evidently relying on a Supreme power. He died on the morning of Friday, May 22, 1856. The following Sunday his body was committed to the ground by the Rev. T. N. Benedict of Galena, Illinois, using the burial service of the Episcopal Church.

During his illness he received every care and attention from his friends in this place. In the presence of several gentlemen, he made arrangements in regard to his tem-

poral affairs. I cannot but regret that I did not charge my mind more particularly with many of his say-
ings while he was with us ; which I should have Remarks upon his life and character.
done, had I been aware or even apprehensive that his life was so near its close. He spoke freely of his past history, and freely on all subjects, except that of finance. Once he said to us that he had never spent an hour of his life in planning how to make money. Much of his suffering in life I attributed to his delicate organization and extreme sensitiveness, and to his distrust of mankind generally, from the fact of his having been sadly deceived in his boyhood by those who should have been his friends. It was this which, through life, caused him much suffering. . . . While here, we never saw in him the cynic or misanthrope. Stimulants and narcotics he avoided as poisons. I would add, that no other man, I presume, would have been regarded by the people of this State with more respect and admiration for his scientific attainments. We regarded him almost in the light of a sinless being.

J. L. JENCKES.

The affectionate attachment of the Western people, who came to know him well, is the last expression of the warm friendship which he always created among his intimates. In the public mind his name now as a leader Testimonials to his worth.
among poets had been superseded by younger men striving for the laurel crown. The poet Bryant, in a tribute to his memory, aptly said : " His devotion to scientific pursuits long survived his literary ambition ; and though long silent as a poet, the country has lost in him one of the most accomplished of her men of science, cut down in the vigor of his faculties and in the midst of his

unfinished tasks."* His loss was widely noticed by the press, and many Societies of which he was a member, specially the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, united in reverent testimonials to his worth. His own Alma Mater laid her choicest chaplet upon his new-made grave; and all who loved the poet of their youth, and all whom his name still fascinates as a great leader in our literature, felt that a prince among our men of letters had fallen. The number of those who are attracted by his genius is not large, never will be; but there is a mysterious charm about his peculiar life, a lofty spirit in his writings, a great lesson in his example, which will not soon pass away. A man of ripe judgment in literature,
His place in literature. Mr. Tuckerman, has said, "Choice pieces enough may easily be gleaned from his voluminous writings to constitute a just and rare claim to renown and sympathy." There is even now a large number who enjoy his poetry and venerate his memory. His tomb is far away in Hazel Green, too far for those of us who would gladly visit his resting-place; not too far for imaginative communing with the spirit of the great one gone. The sanctuaries of our great dead may be neglected, they cannot be forgotten. Our grief for Percival culminates at his grave.

Stanzas from
 A Lament
 for Percival.

"And Clio, heavenly muse, descends
 At twilight's hushed and solemn hour,
 And o'er his tomb in silence bends
 With grief beyond expression's power.

.

"Thou, of the pure and lofty mind,
 What was the world's applause to thee?
 Should Fame her brightest chaplet bind,
 Thou wouldst the dazzling pageant flee.

* Evening Post, May 6, 1856.

“ Amid the shades of solitude,
Where Contemplation sits enthroned,
Thou lov'dst to dwell, when wild and rude
The autumn blasts around thee moaned.

“ Long as the murmuring stream shall flow,
In liquid music to the sea,
Thy spotless name, dear bard, shall glow,
In yon bright temple of the free.

“ Long as the dark green pines shall wave,
O'er breezy plain or towering steep,
The pilgrim oft shall seek thy grave,
And o'er the shrine of genius weep.”





APPENDIX.





APPENDIX A.

(PAGE 3.)

PERCIVAL'S GENEALOGY.



THIS brother Oswin tells me that the name Percival is derived from the ancient Percy family, belonging to the northern counties of England. They were known, or some of them, as Percy de Valle, the Percy of the valley, whence the name in familiar speech, Percival.

He himself made an elaborate chart of the English branch of his family, but it breaks off before he comes down to their emigration to America. Mr. Draper remarks: "In conversation with Dr. Percival, I learned that his family were related to the renowned English statesman, Spencer Percival, and that the American branch first settled in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Dr. Percival told me, that, on one occasion, when he was travelling in Western New York, he stopped at a country inn, and without knowing the name of the landlord, instantly recognized in his features a Percival, and upon inquiring found that he was a descendant from the Marblehead family of that name." It is probable that the family originally settling at Marblehead, Massachusetts, emigrated in the next generation to other places. The following genealogy of the family is taken from the manuscript work of Mr. D. Williams Patteson, an enthusiastic and laborious scholar.

James Percival was married February 27, 1696, to Abigail Robinson, b. Barnstable, Mass., March 20, 1674, dau. of John and Elizabeth (Weeks) Robinson, g. dau. of Isaac and Margaret (Hanaford) Robinson, and g. g. dau. of the celebrated Leyden pastor, the Rev. John Robinson and his wife, Bridget (White) Robinson.

"James Pasival of Falmoth in y^e County of Barnestable & Colony of Boston" bought land in East Haddam, Conn., June 19, 1705, of Matthew Rowley and Johanah his wife, of East Haddam.

"feb. 2, 1706 - 7. Abigail Parsivel y^e wife of Jeames parsivel being by a letter recommendatory dismissed from y^e Church of christ att barnstable w^of she was a member by y^e Rev. Mr. Jonathan Russel pastor of that church was received among us by virtue of said Letter." — *Records of the First Church in East Haddam.*

James Percival was baptized and admitted to the church in East Haddam, May 1, 1709.

His son John was born at East Haddam, Oct. 17, 1706 ; bap. Feb. 2, 1706 - 7 ; m. Aug. 5, 1731, Hannah Whitmore. They were admitted to the church, in East Haddam, Sept. 29, 1734. Capt. John Percival died Sept. 14, 1786, in his eightieth year ; and Mrs. Hannah Percival, May 2, 1803, in her ninety-third year.

His son James was born at East Haddam, July 6, 1736 ; bap. Aug. 15, 1736. He married for his second wife, June 19, 1766, Dorothy Gates, born at East Haddam, Feb. 3, 1744, daughter of Thomas and Dorothy Gates.

His son James was born at East Haddam, April 20, 1767 ; bap. in Kensington Society, now Berlin, Conn., Aug. 26, 1787. He married Elizabeth Hart. He died suddenly, at Berlin, on Thursday, Jan. 22, 1807, aged forty years.

His children were, —

1. Harriet, who died in her seventeenth year.
2. Edwin, born about 1793, bap. at Kensington, Oct. 29, 1809 ; died in Troy, N. Y.
3. James Gates, born Sept. 15, 1795 ; bap. at Kensington, Oct. 29, 1809.
4. Oswin Hart, born about 1797 ; bap. at Kensington, Oct. 29, 1809.

APPENDIX B.

(PAGE 131.)

ON SOME OF THE MORAL AND POLITICAL TRUTHS DERIVABLE FROM THE STUDY OF HISTORY. An Oration delivered before the Φ . B. K. Society of Yale College, September 10, 1822, by James G. Percival, M. D.

IT is the peculiar property of man to retain memorials of departed ages. Other animals know only the generation before them, and some are even shut up in their own poor selves. But men in all grades and all conditions preserve the record of the past, and rescue the deeds of former times from oblivion. The savage has his traditions, and the cultured man his monuments and his annals to give permanency to the events that have passed away; and long after their bones have crumbled, the actions of the perished great are familiar to us as household words.

It is interesting to stand on the present moment, and look back on the tumultuous sea that is rolling behind us, and, while we feel firm in our own security, follow the track of empire and of nation through all the brightness of prosperity and the storms of political convulsion. It is interesting to see many a strong ship that had ventured forth on a long and daring voyage, battling with the tempest and sinking in the waters, and many a feeble bark gliding along in calm and sunshine, and seeking a quiet course in the shelter of the shore.

We are not confined in our researches to the crowds that are moving around us. We can go far off among the nations and far back among the centuries, and learn from the errors of those who are and have been, to be wiser for the future. We have indeed a greater readiness to learn than to profit by our knowledge, and the philanthropist has been too often disappointed and heart-sickened by the perversity of man to hope for much that is better or brighter in society. But if nothing else can prompt to study the remains of the past, our curiosity will not suffer us to neglect them. We too often know more of the thousand years that are gone by than the days that are passing around us, and more of the lands where

the sun rises and sets than the spots in our own immediate vicinity. We have little reason to fear that Troy will be forgotten, or Rome perish from our thoughts. While their heroes and their sages can ornament the pages of the lettered man, we may rest assured he will not fail to profit by them ; and while there are scholars proud of knowing all that is curious and rare, we shall not even forget the idlest whims of ancient extravagance.

It is to little purpose that we remember facts if we do not compare them. The knowledge made up of insulated details is a vain possession. It is better to reason from our own experience, and to draw lessons from the humble events of our own lives, than to know all the greatest things that the greatest men have done, only as things that have been. We may commend the memory of the man who carries about with him a full and perfect table of chronology, but we can never confide to such an one even the smallest of our interests.

Much has been written on the study and use of History. It surely cannot be worth our while to learn the simple details of events and to store our memory with their dates, for the mere purpose of repeating them on occasion, or in other words, that we may not be thought ignorant in good company. The man who knows his own value, and who feels that a page of true philosophy is better than a whole library of curious knowledge, will never fear to say "No," where a vain curiosity is alone concerned. He will have none of those terrors which little minds feel, when they find themselves in the society of anecdotists and amateurs ; and while he is conscious that he is the slave of no prejudice and the pure disciple of truth and nature, he will care little for the names that have strutted their brief hour before the admiring crowd.

History should be philosophy teaching by example. If we read it to be amused, we shall indeed dwell on the splendid array of power and magnificence that fills its pages ; but if we seek instruction, we shall inquire into the causes that have moved these pageants, and examine the more concealed and humbler instruments by which all the pride of empire is sustained. The inquiring mind cannot rest satisfied without discovering the causes of things, and in no inquiry does the discovery so well compensate the labor as in the search after the properties of our own nature. From no other can we hope or derive so much advantage ; for all that we there learn we can apply. We can there learn the measure of our

knowledge. We can there set bounds to that restless curiosity which has wandered and lost its way in speculations that can only bewilder, and in regions where thought is delirium. We can there learn how limited is the field of true inquiry, and how much that has been called science is an airy and baseless vision ; often beautiful in its ornaments and proportions and grand in its elevation, but only awaiting the first strong assault of reason to fall in ruins. We can there learn that the proudest fabrics of thought, the temples of mind where ages have offered sacrifice and millions have heard the oracles of a fancied wisdom, that all these adored illusions have vanished in their turn, and left scarce a solitary worshipper to lament their fall. We shall there learn, too, the measure of our power. We shall know how far we can hope to command the elements, and bend to our will the mightier energies of nature. We shall no longer expect the ministration of spirits to work us wonders. We shall no longer trust in the power of charm and talisman, but confiding alone in the combinations of science we shall do and have done what antiquity would have gazed on with mute astonishment ; but we shall still find the reality less than our anticipations had formed it. We shall there learn too the measure of our happiness. Founded as it is on the virtues of individuals and the labors of public wisdom, we can there learn from what men have been, what they will be. We can learn in the past how circumstances have modified habits and feelings, how the public character has been formed to independence and industry, or servility and indolence, and thus from the causes which are acting around us, and the motives which are moving and controlling us, we can judge what will be the unchecked result of these combinations, and what counter-motives are necessary to preserve those institutions, without which society is no home for the good.

It cannot be expected that I should embrace in the compass of an oration, a full and perfect system of historical truth. I can only point out some of the great results which we can derive from the study of the past. I have not adhered to a rigid system in the arrangement of my conclusions. As they arose I have recorded them, and if the whole appears disconnected and discordant, I can trust to your kindness to overlook its imperfections.

We are struck at once, in surveying the past, with the short duration of those empires which a single man had formed. It is a consoling reflection that unprincipled and uncontrolled ambition

should so rarely leave anything behind it but the track of its desolating progress. Like the hurricane in the forest, for a time it levels the strong and the lofty, but it soon passes away, the elements of society are again calm, and new cities and new nations rise from the ruins it had made. We need only look at the examples of Alexander, Charlemagne, and Bonaparte. The empires of the two former fell to pieces at their decease, and the latter survived his empire. The cause is obvious. Nations cannot long hold together when suddenly united. It is necessary that their habits and their interests should be gradually blended, that one link should be added and then another to the chain that connects them, or they will necessarily obey the impulse of their peculiar feelings, and part when the strong hand that united them is withdrawn. There is another conspiring cause of separation in the conflicting interests of the favorites of a conqueror. They can obey the man who had made them, but not each other. Accustomed to associate as equals under a common head, when they have lost that head, each seeks his portion in the empire of his master, and begins himself to affect the god. So fell the empire of Alexander, and such might have been the fate of the French empire if it had been less pressed from abroad, and if the great leader who formed it had died in the height of his conquests.

The Roman empire was gradually formed; many hundred years were necessary to build it, and thousands of hands were employed in its construction. These were all great men: they might have singly ruled an empire, but they were actuated by a mighty national spirit; they followed a plan which had been devised in the birth of their nation, and with a self-forbearance and patriotic devotion that had no equal, they persevered in the same grand design, and bound up all their energies in the advancement of the republic. When they conquered a nation they did not annihilate its national individuality. They suffered it to retain its municipal regulations so far as they did not essentially interfere with the Roman power. They left it, its religion, its customs, and often its courts and assemblies. It was the pride of Rome that her freemen ruled kings: the plebeian Consul not only dragged them in triumph at his chariot wheels, but the Proconsul took his seat over them in their own capitals, and with a gratifying mockery suffered them to retain their crowns and sceptres at the expense of their power.

We can read in the history of Rome the history of every empire.

We can there find the means of securing national advancement and perpetuity, and equally the causes of dissolution and decay. We can there learn that without public spirit no nation can remain free and permanent. His country was the Roman's idol; his citizenship was his richest treasure. It was, too, his proudest distinction. It was better to command respect and secure obedience abroad than all the trappings of royalty. The very name of Roman struck a terror through the nations. Every citizen found his highest advantage in the glory of his country, and his whole education was calculated to cultivate the love of that glory.

It is harder to form habits than to continue them. It was harder to make the Romans a race of warriors acting for the extension of their country's power, than to keep up the military spirit when formed. We must look to its earlier history for the full operation of the causes which formed that peculiar empire. They then sought to cultivate the love of glory. They had formed a most delicate sense of national honor, which regarded disgrace worse than death, and submission to an enemy an irreparable evil. They were bound never to desert their eagles. There was no shame like that of a wound in flight. This sense of national honor, keener than that remnant of chivalry, which now leads so many into single combat, was preserved to a late age. When the simple virtues of the early Roman were gone this was retained, and it was not till their armies were filled with foreign mercenaries that it ceased to influence the destinies of the empire.

Each soldier was at first a citizen and had an interest in the soil. A nation of landholders, who owe no rent for the soil they occupy, must be miserably degraded in spirit to be enslaved. If they know the full worth of their advantages they cannot but be free. I speak of such as possess the common energies of man, and who are free from the control of superstition. Superstition can make any people slaves. The strongest and most independent may be bowed to that imaginary terror. There is no slavery like that of the mind. It is better to think freely in fetters than to walk the wide earth the victim of panic terrors. If designing men can succeed in fastening on the public mind the belief that an invisible power is incensed against them, and that they hold in their hands the means of mediation, they may gain over that people any extent of power; and where the public mind is thus enslaved, individuals must have a most daring independence to speak their

thoughts. All the restraints of the press and all the threats of authority are not as powerful in controlling thought as this fear that lurks in every corner.

A nation of landholders have the strongest interest in the soil of their country. Their all is there; if they leave it, they have lost the foundation that sustained them; if they yield to others, they may lose their possessions with their power. But this is not all. The long-continued occupation of a spot gives it a sacredness in our feelings; we are tied to it by a thousand pleasant associations; it was the scene of childhood and its cheerful amusements; of youth and its warm and deep emotions; of manhood and its cares and labors. It has become to us the temple of our Penates,—the altar where we worship the spirit of our domestic endearments, and the tomb that holds the ashes of our fathers. *Pro aris et focis* is the last appeal. “We will retreat to the tombs of our fathers, and we will meet you there.” A nation that does not mean to decay should never hire. The mere mercenary is of course treacherous. If a traitor pay him better, he will plunge his hands in the blood of the state that employs him.

The empire spread with most rapidity after the plebeians were admitted to an equal share in honors. There is an advantage in persuading the people that they have a share in the government, even if they have none. They are proud of their vote if they offer it for sale. They think they have a mighty control over the public destinies if they possess a right which they exchange for the merest trifle. There is nothing that paralyzes a nation more than closing the way to honor but to a privileged few. France has taught us this. During the last century, under the Bourbons, she did nothing in war because her nobility could alone be promoted. But under the late empire, when the meanest soldier could hope to wield the marshal’s staff, and when many of the greatest generals were raised from their ranks, their march was like the flight of their eagles.

There was an advantage in the struggle of the two classes in Rome. They excited each other; they were jealous of each other; but they were jealous of honor as well as of power. The patricians had all the high spirit of an ancient nobility. They could not refuse the plebeians a participation in power, because these had the right of the strongest. They could only run with them the race of glory and struggle to gain the prize. They had the advan-

tage of combination on their side, and they ultimately prevailed; but they purchased their victory at the price of their country's freedom.

The empire owed much of its prosperity to the influence of religion. Its early lawgiver, like the legislators of all rude nations, saw the necessity of calling in the aid of divinity to establish his laws. The institution of auguries was the most powerful part of their religion. It was directed by the highest men in the republic. It was an instrument of controlling efficacy in the hands of men whose aim was the nation's glory. It could check the march of affairs when the public strength was dissipated, and give them time to consolidate their forces. It could urge them, in necessity, to the height of enthusiasm, and give to them that full confidence in the higher powers, which is the earnest of success to the people who possess it. Enlightened men in later times saw the deception and exposed it. They acted unwisely, for real motives are weaker than imaginary ones. They are founded on transient objects, and are therefore short lived themselves; while the other, founded on an ideal conception, on an image ever present to the mind, and ever acting on the will, die not with one generation, but are transmitted from father to son, are inwoven with the earliest thoughts and feelings of childhood, and, from the very fact of their indefiniteness, gain that mysterious uncertain sway over the mind, which always grows and always deepens, the more it is seen and the longer it is followed.

An empire founded on religion may rise rapidly and last long. The conqueror who makes himself a prophet or a god lives for ages in the spirit of his institutions. He has left his representative behind him to occupy his throne, and command the awe which no man in his individual capacity can long maintain. His favorites will submit to the supremacy of his religion when he is gone. If one of their number is raised above them, they will not refuse obedience, because he has the added sanctity of a holy office to disarm their envy. A permanent motive is provided in the spread and support of the divine cause they are engaged in. Its limits cannot become too wide till they are universal, and nothing can check the zeal of their efforts till many and repeated discomfitures have taught them that their cause is not invincible. The Saracenic empire was formed on this principle, and its influence is not yet lost. The cry, the crescent is in danger, will awaken the followers of

the prophet from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. A little light shed on them by a pure philosophy, a better knowledge of the powers of nature, would dissipate the illusion, and they would be as little ready to flock to the green standard, as the Christian nations of Europe to take the cross and again rush on the infidels.

There is a limit in the duration of all things. We are willing to believe the contrary, and to confide in the permanency of those institutions which are our protection and our ornament. We imagine there is a perpetuity in present things. We think the influence of the press and the consequent spread of knowledge, the influence of religion and the consequent purity and humanity, will uphold our institutions beyond the common limits of national establishments, and render the soil we inhabit forever sacred to enlightened freedom. But other nations have fallen, the light of ancient civilization went out, and why may not the same fate await ours? It is wise to trace the causes which destroyed the power and extinguished the light of antiquity, for we may derive from the research some hints of value to ourselves. The tale is soon told. The combination of the great and the corruption of the many destroyed the empire. The universal spirit of dissipation and sordid gain enfeebled and besotted and deformed the public mind, so that philosophy and religion were alike perverted and forgotten.

One cause of the dissolution of the empire was the extension of the right of citizenship. It was confined at first to native citizens of Rome, but gradually one and another small state was added, till it was extended throughout Italy. It was given too as a mark of favor to many in all the conquered nations. Each of these new-made citizens could interfere in the affairs of the republic. They could scatter and weaken that national spirit, by which the empire was founded, and which could be only efficient when concentrated. They widened the limits of Rome, and extended the boundaries of the city to the boundaries of the empire. They made the whole of its wide domain an arena of civil contention. They were the ready tools of the aspiring demagogue. They were marched in armies to the *comitia* beneath the banner of a favorite candidate, and they too often converted the forum and the *campus martius* into fields of blood. With this aid to back him, the power of a successful demagogue became absolute. He had only to speak a word or give a sign, and his enemy was annihilated. He could work the willing mob into a frenzy against the advocate of their own best interests.

When Tiberius Gracchus sought to reform the republic, to break down that monstrous distinction of ranks and fortunes, which had divided the state into lords and slaves, — in fine, to bring back the simplicity of early times, that very populace whose cause he was urging was driven on by its oppressors to commit against him the vilest atrocities. We may find the parallel of this corruption in an unlimited suffrage. If we could rely on the virtue of all, we could intrust to all the highest power : for the power of appointing and displacing is the greatest. But this power is nothing unless it is exercised with independence. It no longer inheres in the nominal possessor, but has passed over to the leader who commands or sways him. In societies endowed with only the common degree of virtue and intelligence, an unlimited suffrage is a tool in the hands of the strong and the artful. It is impossible that those who cannot direct their own common interests should decide on the interests of the public. Indeed, common sense has always excluded some from the elective franchise ; and if some, why not many ? Those who already possess the rights of citizens, who have formed and sustain the political fabric, have a right to associate whom they will in the high privilege. Men are not born to political rights. If their natural rights are encroached upon by the government that protects them, as a consequence of human nature they will resist, and may prevail. When the unprivileged and undeserving have increased to an overwhelming majority, they will know their physical strength and exert it : but they will use it only to throw it away. It will only be a new addition to the power of some aspirer. That government is preparing its own grave, where the power of the great galls the multitude, and the crowd of the idle and the dissolute has swelled beyond the virtuous advocates of order. Where there is a mob unfit to govern, and too numerous to be despised, demanding a full share in the rights of citizens, to refuse them is destruction, for it will end in civil tumult ; to comply is alike fatal, for the state will be stifled in corruption. It is but giving up the government to the hands of a despot. This leads us to the conclusion, that government must be suited to the state of the governed. A corrupt society requires a strong government. It not only requires it, but it will sooner or later have one. We speak of a government as if it were something distinct from the people, as if it were an independent power possessing its own life in itself, not depending for its existence on its adaptation to the

crowd it rests on. A government may be wholly discordant with the feelings of the many and yet last long, but it must make that many weak and itself strong. It must attach to itself, and feed and pamper a combination strong enough to crush the rest. It must darken and debilitate and divide the public mind. But a strong government may rule, and the most successful of them do rule by humoring the favorite foibles of the crowd. If the Londoner can evaporate his patriotism in a mob, and the Parisian delight himself with a brilliant spectacle, they will leave the state to move on unmolested. Every new struggle of the populace will then only bind its chains the faster.

Another cause of the ruin of the empire was the growth of the capital. This was the natural consequence of things. A government that is felt will be sought. Some will go to deprecate its resentment, but more to profit by its favors. They naturally believe the hand that can injure must have power, and that power they hope may be made propitious. It is a curious fact that ignorant nations worship their evil spirits with the highest devotion. No wonder there should be little warmth in worship when the attributes of their deities are only kindness and mercy. Such a religion is like a warm and sunny day. We bask in its brightness, we sport in its mellow atmosphere, and are absorbed in the intensity of our pleasures; but when the clouds gather and the storm rolls over us, we feel our own insignificance and know there is a strength surpassing ours. So it is with a dark religion and a strong government; the one is worshipped with fear and trembling, the other is courted with anxious hope.

A government that is felt draws crowds around its centre, and these crowds, of course, form a great city. When they are once stationed they must have employment. Naturally indolent, as all men are who are not governed by a commanding motive, they are fit tools for the state to work with. They love those alternations of slothful repose and boisterous excitement, which make up the life of the soldier and the retainer. A city formed in this way is the worst of cities, because it incloses the greatest amount of idleness and debauchery, and because it gives the most frequent excitement to those combustible materials. The world looks pale at the enormities of Rome. We can hardly imagine human nature could be so infected. There was an openness, an éffrontery in its vice, that would make a modern capital blush: and this was habitual;

not the momentary excitement of a mob or a revolution, not the atrocities of a few mad years followed by a calm, but a permanent grossness and cruelty, which no blood could satiate and no indulgence could weary.

Commerce was disgraceful to a Roman, and Rome was not a trading city. It became a city of intrigue, of corruption, and of pleasure. The evil of the empire was there concentrated. Discontented and disorderly spirits assembled there, and were always ready for a change. Each had his price, and the spoils of the world were wasted in feeding and amusing with shows and spectacles the instruments of ambition. Like the waves when the winds are in conflict, they now rolled with one and then yielded to another, till the unbridled populace became one mingled mass of uproar and confusion.

A great city is always an evil. It may be necessary, but it is an evil still. It excites the passions. The influence of a mob is maddening. Minds when crowded and conflicting take fire by collision. The effect of sympathy is next to miraculous. A great crowd is as one body. An emotion excited at one extremity runs with electrical velocity through the whole. Sober men may become mad in such a crowd. They may be wrought in their insanity to deeds they would have thought impossible in their cooler moments. They may be driven on by an artful eloquence, by inflammatory cries of alarm and watchwords of danger, to prostrate in an hour the work of ages. The strongest government may tremble at such a shock. But often when they have triumphed, and old institutions are levelled, and society is in ruins, they weep over the very ruins their hands have made. Then, in their weariness and regret, when they repose on the mischief they had wrought and the ashes of the fires they had kindled, — then comes the watchful demagogue and makes them his slaves.

A great city stifles and dissipates the feelings of nature. It draws us from the bosom of our common mother, and of course gives birth to inequality and oppression. It gives full scope to cunning and fraud. It encourages monopolies. It gives birth to those systematic establishments of labor; those living machines, where the hands of thousands are moved like the wheels of an engine. Man there loses his independence and becomes the instrument of another. He loses his sense of dignity, his self-respect. He has no longer that sure prop of personal worth, without which morals totter and

virtue falls. But he does not come willingly to this. Nature feels many pangs before she dies. And when her light has gone out, and there is a full conviction that he lives without hope and toils to only live, he seeks those low indulgences, which can stifle thought and drown his feelings in oblivion.

Great cities nourish vice because they conceal it. There is a natural repugnance in all to baseness. It costs some effort to eradicate shame. Few, even the worst, will venture to be flagitious in open day. We call crimes, deeds of darkness, deeds that seek concealment, and lurk in corners; and in cities this concealment is easily found. Combinations of villainy may there be formed and perfected. A city is a proper field for a conspiracy. If a nation is ruined by a plot it must be ruined there. It could nowhere else collect and arrange its materials and ripen them to execution.

Great cities are usually the arbiters of nations. There are exceptions, but they are more seeming than real. Moscow perished, but Russia survived. But it was only the skeleton of Moscow that perished; the soul was living still. If its citizens had quietly submitted to the invader, and loved their homes better than their nation, then Moscow would have indeed perished, and Russia with it. Athens, too, sunk before the fires of the Persian; but she was living in her fleet, and revived again with added splendor. But where the ruin reaches the hearts of the citizens, where the revolution is in mind and not in wealth and edifices, then the nation follows the capital. So Paris controlled the destinies of the French nation, and every movement of its populace was felt through the empire.

A great city is a lottery, where a few great prizes are at hazard, but disappointment and ruin are the lot of the many. To be rich and to be famous are the great objects of all who aspire. But few can possess immense wealth, and fewer exalted fame. It is the lot of few indeed to be the mark of public attention, to be followed by the gaze of the discerning, and pointed out by the passers by, as one who has surpassed the common efforts of man. Not all who deserve, gain. Genius is a tender plant. Those keen, and rapid, and susceptible minds who alone possess that gift, which kindles enthusiasm in others, are easily crushed by oppression. They cannot struggle long, when all is adverse. Their efforts may be desperate, but their despair is deep, it is fatal. A city if it does not cherish is the grave of genius. There Burns took his death. There

Chatterton despaired. There Otway wrote and starved. It is little that the world honors their ashes. They are men. They can smile at distress with the sure prospect of future fame; but too often a dark cloud overshadows them, and in the deepest of their calamities the consciousness of their own excellence abandons them.

But cities have their advantages. They concentrate talent and excite it by emulation. Combinations are there easier formed and strength better united. The power that emanates from a great capital comes with added force. There is something mysterious and indefinite in its wilderness of streets and dwellings, its swarming population and its magnificent edifices. There is something which we cannot measure, and which we therefore magnify. A great empire should have a great capital. It is necessary to command respect. It gives to authority a shrine where the crowd may worship. A king in a fortress would lose his significance. The best walls of tyrants are troops of corrupted slaves. It is necessary to employ and stifle the aspiring and the restless. They are best moulded and easiest quelled beneath the eye of government. They may be there too best employed and soonest subdued by corruption. There wants and temptations are greatest. They soon find themselves compelled to abandon their high designs and cater for their own necessities. They are then for sale at the highest bidder, and a strong government will always find its interest in out-bidding.

The empire could not have been advanced and sustained without extending the right of citizenship. The city alone could not conquer the world. Like all other conquering states, she made the last conquered the means of subduing the next. But she could not have made them her ready instruments without granting some privilege. She granted her citizenship. This gave them a common cause. They fancied at least that they formed a part of the republic, and they fought for it with a portion of Roman zeal. Beginning from a single point, that empire never could have been formed, if the citizenship had not extended its influence through the conquered nations and linked them all to one common head.

If what I have said be just, two great causes of the ruin of that empire were necessary to its growth and continuance. It had the cause of its dissolution in itself. Like the functions of a living body, which decay and die by exercise, which have a period of in-

crease and a period of diminution, that mighty empire, which overshadowed a continent, and embraced the whole circle of ancient civilization, perished by the causes which had raised it.

Perhaps I owe an apology for dwelling so long on so hackneyed a subject. Antiquity has been too often ransacked to leave much that is new. Its institutions had little affinity to ours. They were formed on different principles, but their elements were the same powers and the same dispositions, and their end was the same. Human nature has not altered with years. Its laws are fixed and invariable. With the same circumstances to affect it, we always see the same results. We imagine there was a nobleness, a high spirit, a devotion in the great men of antiquity, which modern worthies cannot boast of. Eloquence is lavish on this point. We see the weakness as well as the worth of our contemporaries, while the mist of centuries gathers over ancient renown, obscures its faults, hides its deformities, and gives to its form a gigantic greatness.

The ancients were unlike us, for they were more the children of nature. They were governed more by the impulse of feeling, and less by the cool consideration of interest. They were not so deeply imbued with the commercial spirit. They did not so manage everything by money, but they trusted more to the generous excitement of the moment. Their orations had more of harangue than of argument; their philosophy more of musing and rhapsody, than sober thought. They had more warmth and fancy, less system and detail. They owed much of the triumph of their eloquence to their quick and ardent temperament, to the deep interest of circumstances, and the impassioned and almost delirious manner of their orators. These triumphs were not miracles; they were only the natural consequence of passionate spirits acted on by burning words, vehement action, and an eye that looked its thoughts. They set on money a certain value, but it was not as now the spring that moved a nation. It was in war a necessity, where mercenaries were employed. But they relied more on the resources of the enemy's country, and less on the provisions of the commissariat. Hence, their movements were more rapid. Hence, by following their example, France gave for a time the law to Europe. We think they had more bravery and self-denial. We look to Marathon as unparalleled in modern times. But we should remember that it was less the constant spirit, than the madness of necessity; the last

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convulsive struggles of a people ready to be overwhelmed : and if they conquered, they had all the vigor, all the fire, and all the combination on their side ; and on the other only a tumultuous mass, without discipline and without manhood. Modern times can set off their parallels against the great deeds of antiquity. We can find a Marathon in Bunker's Hill, an Athens in Moscow, and a Numancia in Saragossa. Perhaps even now the sons of the Greeks are exerting an equal bravery against a race of barbarians more relentless and more cruel. The world is indeed presented with a singular spectacle. Christians are united with Turks to murder Christians ; and this to preserve an abstract balance of power. A nation in fetters, descended from the nation that every scholar idolizes and every lover of freedom looks to as its original father, that nation is struggling to break its yoke and assert its rights and liberties. They have seen their brethren butchered, tortured, and enslaved. They are threatened with their own extermination, without a friendly power to cheer or an ally to protect them ; and yet against this fearful odds they do not yield, but with the spirit of ancient Athens devote themselves to liberty or death. There is no other alternative. If Christian nations look on unconcerned, if they aid their oppressors and thwart their generous efforts ; if free nations move not at their call ; what can they expect but the scimitar of the Turk and the fate of Scio. They tell us the Greeks have invited their destiny ; that they have set the first example and given the first blow. Can a people suffer for centuries and not be exasperated ? Can they be governed by unfeeling barbarians and not strive to break their yoke ? And if in the excitement they do retaliate, should we do less ? Human nature cannot bear forever. Cold indeed must be the heart, and weak the hand, that would not revenge the death of a parent and brother, and the dishonor and slavery of a wife and sister.

But we are far removed from the sight and hearing of these enormities. They come to us only as the last echo of a dirge, or the dying fall of a tempest. We sit beneath our quiet roofs and hear the war of the winds at a distance, and as we gather around our cheerful firesides we feel a new pleasure, that all within is so pleasant, and all without so cold and stormy. We have between us and the age and infirmities of Europe a separating ocean. When we left that continent we cast away the shackles and trappings that now bind and burden the slave of old establishments. We have

approximated to nature, and begun anew the race of national existence. We have begun it under favorable auspices, and with few incumbrances. We have already done much, and a bright vista opens before us. Our fathers have embalmed their names in glory. They have inscribed them on the pillars of an empire, which is now among the widest, and which we hope will rise the loftiest. We may well indulge in fond anticipations, with so much already achieved and with such materials for future achievement. But we shall not gain the prize without high exertion. Our rights were hardly earned. They must be strenuously preserved. Our institutions were reared with anxious care, and they will not survive the blight of negligence. We should not be without our fears. Clouds are gathering in the future, and there they will gather and deepen, if patriotic energy hasten not and disperse them. In the happiness of the moment, we see nothing before us but calm and sunshine. We indulge in the brightest visions of coming glory, and we already see our nation wreathed with valor and arts and letters. We already see it giving law to Europe in taste and refinement, and sending back in heightened beauty the borrowed treasures of thought and feeling. But such things cannot be, if we merely sit still and let the years roll onward. They will not bring improvement of themselves, and if we do not advance, we shall retire. There is nothing stationary in man. It is the wise and benevolent law of destiny, that we can only secure and extend our blessings by exertion. Without it all things decay.

Omnia fatis

In pejus ruere, ac retro sublapsa referri.

We are not without enemies, who are carefully watching the moment to stab our liberties. Machiavelli has many disciples here; men who will not scruple to employ every growing evil of society, as a tool of corrupt ambition. Evils will increase, as a nation grows older. Population will advance with a secret and silent progress. The different ranks of society, for ranks are everywhere, will part wider and wider, and become more and more hostile. The rich will concentrate power, and the middling class will resist them. If the poor have not here a virtue which they have never had elsewhere, they will follow where corruption leads, and our equal liberties will have ended. Here we must stand and raise the bulwark. We must, if we can, correct the tendency of the power-

ful to use their power ; but more than this, we must lift all above the wretchedness of extreme poverty, and give the lower and the weaker a determined purpose to reject a bribe and resist encroachment. The elegant edifice needs the support of a rustic basement, and the polished ranks of society owe their security to the integrity of the lower.

Let us not then, for any deceitful advantage, be found among the ranks of those, who would rather hasten than retard the inevitable progress of evil. Sooner or later it will be felt. But we can, if we will, long defer the dreaded consummation. Perhaps we may even introduce a preserving and a renovating principle, which will give to every new age the freshness of a brighter youth. Our powers are indeed limited, but their exact limits are unknown. Cheered by our very ignorance, we may hope, because we do not know. We may anticipate miracles and work them, for there is no strength like that of confidence. Let us then, brethren of the Society, go on in the godlike purpose of securing and extending our liberties. We cannot be better employed, for we shall carry with us the sanction of Heaven.

Εἰς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

Let us then engage in the cause with the spirit of a truly enlightened benevolence. Let there be no narrow views nor sectarian prejudices, no party schemes nor local prepossessions. Let truth alone be our light and reason our director. Let us go on in the energy of sincerity, and we shall be hailed and cheered by every philanthropist. Dark minds may frown upon us, and base souls may hate us ; corruption may fear the light, and superstition tremble ; but the good will rejoice, and humanity be glad in our labors.

APPENDIX C.

(PAGE 152.)

SPECIMENS OF EDITORIALS.

THE THEATRE.

WE have no theatres in Connecticut, and we therefore cannot feel the same interest in dramatic controversies as those who are present and engaged in the contest. We allude to the late excitement in Boston on the subject of a well-known prosecution. We have little experience in the details of the dramatic art, and can only judge of the merits of a performer by our native feelings and the general principles of criticism, so far as we understand them. We have seen the actor, who has been the subject of the late Boston controversy, only once, and we do not wish to pronounce a decided judgment on his merits in his own peculiar way. We rather give our attention at present to the general value of the drama as a moral means of forming the public character, and to the comparative power of its different departments in acting on the taste and feelings of an audience. Theatrical performances have been entirely forbidden in this State; and this law has been considered the result of the Puritanic spirit which we have inherited from our fathers. There was a time when theatres were allowed here; but they evidently had then an evil tendency; for the feelings of the better classes were against them, and they were obliged to draw for their support chiefly on those who had the least of knowledge and refinement; consequently, the performances were for the most part worthless. We believe the mischief of theatres arises in a good degree from the necessity of gratifying the gross tastes and corrupt appetites of the many. The managers must make them a profitable concern; they must fill their houses; and to do this, they must attract the gods, as cant calls them, to the upper regions, by smut and buffoonery. If a select theatre could be established, where nothing could be admitted but the masterpieces of the drama, it would not only be a school of taste, but a moral engine of no trifling power.

The theatre was the great public school of the ancients: it held the place of the modern pulpit. Even now, among the Catholics of the south of Europe, the dramatic art is employed in the service of religion; and their mysteries are designed, though very injudiciously, to begin the work of reformation, which is to be finished in the sanctuary. The dramas of the ancients were morality, speaking, and acting. The plots were simple, the incidents few, and little calculated to please for their own sake, or to fasten the attention on the chain of the story, to the exclusion of the beauties of thought and language, and the moral reflections, on which the mind of the author seemed more particularly to dwell. Their tragic poets and their refined comedians, instead of collecting together a distracting assemblage of uncommon scenes and incidents, labored on the structure of their language, the choice of their images and sentiments, the harmony of their characters, and the union of all the parts into one perfect whole. They took a lofty stand, and they maintained it. They did not come down to play with the trifles of our older poets; they did not blend low comedy with deep tragedy, nor disturb the high emotions they had called up, nor the beautiful sympathies they had awakened, by introducing characters taken from human nature in its meanest forms and most revolting appearances. This was not actual life, at least not such life as meets us every day; but it was something which had its source in the nature of man, and which might be, and has been, called out under the influence of uncommon circumstances. The Prometheus of Æschylus would meet but a sorry reception on a modern stage, even if its mythology were changed for a creed and a system more nearly allied to present notions. But what can be grander to the initiated mind, to the understanding which has entered the shrine of those early mysteries, and the heart which has learned to sympathize with the emotions of a loftier existence? We are there presented with the character of a firm and unyielding martyr, — the tenderest benevolence for the weak and the suffering, and the keenest indignation and the boldest defiance against the powerfully wicked. To a mind, who can once realize the mythology, and feel as a believer would feel, there is an interest deep at the very opening, and deepening as the action advances, without anything to divert the attention, or derange the fine structure of sympathy which the poet is forming within us. Insensible to his own calamities, when the injustice of his oppressors, and the

wretchedness of the beings he had sought to relieve, is before him, — ready to comfort others, while he rejects the sympathy of friends who can give him no other aid, — yielding to pain only in moments of solitude ; and even led by his pain to renewed resistance ; we have before us that inflexible but feeling spirit, which gave a sanctity to the dying martyr. Such dramas would not succeed here, because they are not life in its more usual appearances ; but such a drama, adapted to the religion, the feelings, and knowledge of the present age, would, I have no doubt, find among the more imaginative the most enthusiastic reception ; and it might be made to awaken all our best affections, to enliven the dormant seeds of great and lofty purposes, and to do more to quicken one in the way to the only true excellence, than a whole library of cold and heartless dissertations.

In our opinion, the comic scenes in the tragedies of Shakespeare are blemishes in their acting. We have often felt a painful revulsion, when our attention was called off from the high-wrought scenes we had been passing through, to the pranks of the witches and the sorry trick of the grave-digger's jackets. These are not so much the fault of the poet, as of the managers, or rather of the public taste which demands them. We are told they are necessary to keep the crowd in humor. It is a misfortune that the crowd were ever allowed to force aside the inspiration of such an author into so unworthy a channel ; and still more so, that they should be allowed to make what is *bad*, worse in the acting. Taking it as it is written, there is nothing in the machinery of the witches which need to be low and disgusting. Their charms are fantastic, but they were awful in their day. They must have had a power to chill the blood of those who had the belief necessary to be acted on by them. Put them in the mouth of a Norna, and they would be still words of power. Let us only exchange the foul tatters, the ugly vizards, the tottering decrepitude, and the laughable tricks of our modern witches, for a female, majestic in her decay, proud and dignified in her action, solemn in her tones, and decent in her costume, not in rags, but in the mysterious yet elegant dress of a sorceress ; and the effect on every well-tuned mind would be tenfold ; it would be changed from disgust to awe. But Shakespeare, in accommodating himself to the taste of the age, departed from the truth of tradition. The females who met Macbeth on the blasted heath were not witches in the modern sense of the word ; they

were Destinies of the North, the Goddesses of Fate and Death. They were represented as gigantic females of a dark and awful beauty, moving through the air with the swiftness of spirits, or speeding on horseback alike over the earth and the ocean. Like the eagles, where the battle was, there they were. It was their office to ride with drawn swords through the ranks to select such as were doomed to fall, and carry them away to the hall of Odin; for it was a part of their warlike religion, that all who fell in battle were chosen to happiness; as the ancients said,

"Whom the gods love, die young."

Three of these *fatal Sisters* were supposed to have met Macbeth on the heath, and to have foretold his elevation and his fall. In the ideal Macbeth, we would strike out the vulgarity of the witches and the smut of the porter. We would substitute for the former the awful Destinies of the North or the mysterious sorceress of a later age. There would then be nothing to divert the attention from the grand flow of excitement which is otherwise so well sustained; and human sympathies would be harmoniously blended with the marvellous. But this would not suit the popular taste, if such a word as *taste* can be so meanly applied. This may be very true, and therefore the theatre must always be a place from which finer and better minds will often turn away with disgust. There are theatres in Paris where nothing low is admitted, where none but the best pieces are performed, and where the audience are collected not to stare at the wonderful and laugh at the ridiculous, but to indulge in a "feast of reason and a flow of soul." This we would call the ideal theatre, and we would consider it the surest test that there was a powerful body of correct taste and pure feeling in a city, if such a theatre could be supported *there*. We have no objections to farce, harlequin, and mimicry; but we wish them confined within their proper sphere, not blended in the same piece or the same entertainment with the highest efforts of the tragic Muse. We would have this our favorite theatre open only to the higher tragedy, such as awakens our noblest and most powerful feelings; to the tenderer tragedy, and those scenes of sorrow which are terminated by a bright catastrophe (the *tragedie bourgeoise* and *comédie larmoyante* of the French); and to the genteel comedy. All below these should be sacredly proscribed, and denied all manner of entrance. There should be nothing admitted that would gratify a

single malignant feeling, draw forth a single burst of laughter, or cause the slightest blush. The audience should wonder, and glow, and weep, and smile, as the poet or the actor called up this or that passion; but none should go away with a heart corrupted or a mind debased. The understanding, the passions, and the senses would there unite to produce one grand enchantment. It would not be an amusement to wear away the time, but it would be an exercise that would employ our very best faculties.

To be a great actor on such a stage would be an honor indeed. With such authors and such actors, who would say that the theatre *might* not be employed to accomplish the very best moral purposes?

GENIUS.

Perhaps there is no subject on which so much vague language and unmeaning declamation is allowed as that of Genius. It is considered by most as a peculiar gift from some higher being, which, according to the piety of the individual defining it, is either Deity or Nature. It is supposed to be an endowment apart from our ordinary faculties, a certain controlling faculty by itself, which presides over and moulds all the others to its purposes. We very often hear them tell of genius soaring like an eagle, and leaving the common track of the human faculties, to visit regions which are accessible only to beings of a higher order. This will all do very well for declamation; but, to say the least, it is very unphilosophical language. We have no hesitation in saying, that genius is not a separate quality of the mind, but only a peculiar state of all the faculties composing it; or, to use language more satisfactory to ourselves, a peculiar constitution of the mind, by which certain of its operations are conducted with unusual facility and power. There is a genius for almost every pursuit. There is a genius for the arts, for poetry, and for eloquence; a mechanical and a philosophical genius. This only means, that the person possessing it is capable of attaining to uncommon excellence in his particular province. There are some who are called universal geniuses; this only means, that such minds are endowed with a flexibility which enables them to pass with readiness from one operation to another, and in all, to surpass common efforts. Genius was defined by Dr. Dwight, "the power of making unusual mental efforts," — by John Duncan, "the power of bringing the greatest

number of particulars to bear on one point, and inversely of deducing the greatest number of particulars from one point"; or, in other words, superior comprehension. This, however, applies more particularly to philosophical geniuses. We would define poetical genius, — a peculiarly excited and impassioned state of the mind, accompanied with nice sensibility and rapid associations, by which it is fitted to call up and unite together the materials of imagery in such a manner as shall give to the reader the most complete and commanding sense of reality.

CHARACTER OF BONAPARTE.

There has been much contention in the newspapers respecting the character of Bonaparte, and the degree of credit to be given to his anecdotists, O'Meara and Las Casas. Opinions seem to have differed as widely on this subject as they ever did in the height of his power. Some have given full credit to his own professions of disinterested benevolence; and they really seem to believe that the great object of all his efforts was the deliverance of Europe, and the world to boot, from the overgrown abuses of centuries. There is another class, who are not at all disposed to rank him a whit above the common herd of conquerors; they believe, that like all ambitious men, his immediate object was personal aggrandizement, and that if he ever did engage in more benevolent labors, it was only in the way of an interlude, and as a set-off to the darker parts of his character. It is not our intention to decide on the natural qualities of his heart or the powers of his understanding. There is good reason for believing that he had enough of mildness and pleasantness of temper, to secure the affections of those immediately about his person; and he certainly had the art of winning the attachment of his soldiers. There can no longer be any question of the greatness of his talents. He has given too practical an illustration of his energy, his comprehension, and his cunning, ever to permit a doubt of the greatness of his mind. The only question on which there will probably be a wide difference of opinion, is, as to the ultimate aim of his efforts, — whether he was, like the conquerors who had gone before him, actuated by selfish motives and love of power and glory; or whether he was in pursuit of certain great plans of political improvement; and that, when he had removed by force every existing obstacle, his intention was to restore

society to its primitive simplicity, and to place it on such a firm and equal basis, that the usurpations which he found in Europe could not again be restored. Such things might have glanced across his mind, amid the crowd of great plans which he had cherished there ; and he might have thought it a grand result to reign over Europe as a protecting spirit ; and while he left all below him equal, and allowed no other distinction but merit, to preside himself over the public destinies, and be to them little less than a present god. We can conceive such a consummation of his military labors, and we can more readily allow him the credit of such an intention, since it has been a favorite amusement with such conquerors to abdicate their external authority, and still continue to rule in the fears of their subjects. We have three memorable examples of this, in Sylla, Diocletian, and Charles the Fifth. They were not the less emperors and dictators because they shut themselves up in retirement ; they still retained a fast hold on their power ; and if things had not moved as pleased them, they would have started up and been " themselves again." The return of Bonaparte from Elba was a striking example of the power of a name ; he had planted his authority deep in the hearts of his soldiers and of a large part of the nation. There seemed to be a magic influence, which drew all beneath him, as if there had been a sympathy between his own fortunes and those of the nation. It might not be very difficult to analyze this wonderful movement, and to show how much national pride and self-interest were concerned in bringing him back so triumphantly to Paris. It is sufficient that there may be power without arms, and without love too ; for if we must allow, that the French *did* love their Emperor, yet no one would say that the Romans had a hearty love for one like Sylla, who had too much of Robespierre in his character to be regarded with any other feeling than horror ; and yet we must acknowledge that his power did not end with his abdication ; for if it had, he would not have been suffered to live so quietly amid the monuments of his murders. There was a secret authority hovering about him, which as effectually secured him as if he had been protected by a legion.

We have often been told, that it was the aim of Bonaparte to sweep off all political abuses from the surface of Europe. His advocates point to his code, his public works, and his patronage of the arts and sciences. He undoubtedly did many things there, to be had in grateful remembrance. There was a restless energy

about him, which would not suffer others to be idle. His subjects had to work hard, but they were fed and paid. There was little room for beggars under his authority. Indeed, he went far towards realizing the *maximum* of human production and expenditure. But all this had one fixed purpose, the increase of the *matériel* of his ambition. He strained every nerve and every muscle of his empire to furnish the means of conquest; and he went on, adding state to state, and kingdom to kingdom, till, in his own language, he came so near realizing an universal empire, that he could not but wish to complete it. If he had broken down every government that opposed him; if he had humbled Russia and levelled England, would he have really set about consolidating one universal republic? or would he not, in his unconquerable restlessness, have rather followed the example of Alexander, and sighed for new worlds to conquer? Would he not have persisted, too, in retaining his own supreme authority, and endeavored to realize the patriarchal government of China, where all should be equally his children, but himself their absolute father? And if he did retain his place, would he have been willing to take the crowns from the heads of his family, and reduce them to the condition of private citizens? Would he have restored the wealth which he had accumulated in his and their coffers, to the public treasury, and been content to imitate the magnanimous poverty of Cincinnatus? Would he have dismissed his guards and *gens-d'armes*, and demolished his bastiles? In fine, would he have thrown away "the pomp and circumstance" of military sovereignty, which he had gathered around him to a degree truly Oriental, and been content to appear, like Washington among his unarmed citizens, in a plain black suit? Would he not rather have retained all the wealth and splendor, all the soldiers and artillery, with which he was accustomed to surround his palace? And might he not, like Cromwell, have grown suspicious as he grew older, and have wasted the energy which he once employed in battles and sieges, in detecting and punishing plots? Might he not have left the high flight of the eagle, with which he had so long swept over the continent, and stooped to such a vulture's meal as suited the appetite of Robespierre? Such has been the usual termination of tyranny and conquest, with a few solitary exceptions. We are indeed told of the clemency of Cæsar; but if he had only escaped the daggers of his assassins, might not his seeming character have been changed, and might he not have been as relentless

and unsparing as the worst of his successors? It is dangerous to accumulate power in the hands of a single man. The best and the greatest are too frail to bear the burden meekly; and instead of wishing that another one may rise, and hold, like him, the reins of all Europe, we ought rather to pray, that the governments now existing may preserve a distinct and individual existence. Let them be cautious, too, how they correct abuses by the sword. It is a good instrument of destruction, but a bad one of amendment. Better to retain a portion of present evils, than to wash them away by a deluge of blood.

APPENDIX D.

(PAGE 246.)

FROM THE KNICKERBOCKER MAGAZINE, VOL. VII.

A PHILOSOPHER.

I HAD travelled several hours in a stage, on a cold winter's day, with an individual who had observed an entire silence. Wrapped in his cloak, nothing was visible but a large eye and a high forehead. In the evening, as we stopped for the night, I had an opportunity of observing him more definitely. With a person rather tall and slender were combined thin and attenuated features, and an expression at once sensitive, thoughtful, and benevolent. The whole, however, seemed to be shrouded by an abiding feeling of melancholy and regret; not that which arises from mere personal disappointment or unhappiness, but rather the sadness of a philosopher, who has formed an ideal scheme of general well-being, and has at last found, by too convincing experience, that in this bad world it is utterly impracticable. During the evening, he observed the same silence, and seemed carefully to avoid engaging in the different subjects of conversation that were just started and then abandoned. If his tongue was silent, his eye was not inactive. With deep and rapid glances, he ran over the individuals

before him, and seemed instantly to read their characters. All the other members of the party had retired, and left us alone at a very comfortable fireside. Still, he did not address me. Unwilling to part with one who seemed so peculiar, I ventured to remark, that the weather was unusually severe for the season.

"Yes, but it will be succeeded by weather as unusually mild. The principle of compensation is at work with our climate. A turn of very cold weather is quite sure to be followed by the reverse. The long steady winters of old times are at an end."

"And what cause would you assign for the change?"

"Our business, as men of science, is not first with causes. We must observe and collect facts, compare and arrange them, and then perhaps we may discover causes. If we do not, a body of facts, methodically arranged, is a science, and as such capable of the most useful application. But our philosophers and men of science, so called, are continually hastening back to first causes. They mistake hypotheses for conclusions, and so involve themselves, and all who follow their *dicta*, in a false light, which is but darkness."

"But these remarks rather apply to physical investigations than to moral."

"Equally to all. Impatience of prolonged research, incapacity for extended views, and an eagerness to arrive at some final conclusion, however hasty or insufficient, are the prevailing characteristics of minds that pretend to investigate. Men will act, and act according to their immediate views; and hence the true philosopher, who extends his plans through all space and time, is met at every turn by obstacles, small indeed in themselves, but all combined, like the cords of the Lilliputians, completely fettering his purposes. It is in vain to do more than palliate, and that slightly, the evils of society."

"But would you, therefore, because you cannot eradicate the disease, refuse all assistance?"

"Certainly not. The great principle of existence is action; and this action, in sentient creatures, will always be directed to the attainment of well-being, with the unreflecting or the unprincipled, to the momentary and the selfish, with more enlarged, more considerate, and better balanced natures, to the common and the enduring. But act we must, or we shall be annihilated among the forces that act around and against us. And here is one great

source of the accumulation of evil. Wrong action has brought evil to a head, and induced an overwhelming calamity. A cause, reflection, combination, and then renewed action, in a truer and better direction, would not only prevent the recurrence of calamity, but tend to a positive accumulation of good; yet the necessity of immediate action urges on to commence at once the old career in the old way, and we arrive at the point before gained, or far transcend it, and so prepare for a more fatal catastrophe."

"But does not all this tend to increased activity? Is not the very necessity of remedying evil in itself a good?"

"If we were made only to overcome difficulties and obstacles by exertion, then a life of storms and disasters might be the most desirable, as most conducive to activity. But we are formed with natures, at least some of us are so formed, which can use and enjoy positive good, — intellectual and moral good; and how painful, to one imbued with the feeling of such good, to see human effort all wasted in a region below it."

"But are all capable of realizing or enjoying such good?"

"Perhaps not, — certainly not all equally; but the attachment of the great body to other good, and their perverted activity in pursuit of it, thwart and render almost inefficient the efforts of higher natures to secure the good they desire. Still, the mind is a kingdom to itself, and it is better to stand aloof on the cold and bare rocks, in the sunshine, than to descend to the plain, and mingle in the smoke and dust of the rushing conflict, though the prize may be an empire."

"Is it not better to follow in the train, and extend relief to the sufferers left behind in the strife?"

"Here we come again to the hopeless task of palliating evil, blowing with a fan against the blast of a whirlwind. We may so procure to ourselves the highest moral good, in the consciousness of having done our best to relieve the sufferings of others; but when we think how little good we have imparted, how easily and instantaneously the immense flood of evil may annihilate it, the light that dawned in our hearts is darkened, and we sink beneath the feeling of our inefficiency. Not in the train should be the place of him who aims at the accomplishment of great and real good, but in the van, as a herald of peace between the contending forces. Evil must be prevented in its causes, not palliated in its effects."

Here he raised himself up, with the air of an inspired prophet, and while his eye glowed and his features were as if radiant with inward brightness, he gave utterance, in a voice of fittest intonation, to his pure and high emotions.

“True we were born to act, but still more were we born to think and feel. Only from the bright and holy fountain of certain thought and elevated feeling flows the stream of just and beneficent action. Flowing ever the same, from a perennial spring, it diffuses life and beauty along its borders. But action, proceeding from another source, is like the wasting flood that bursts in the midnight darkness, and blindly sweeps away the wrecks of the valley, to accumulate them in this unwholesome marsh. We have a higher nature within us, governed by its own peculiar laws, fixed and immutable as the laws that control the spheres. If these laws are not counteracted by the lower principles of our being, if in harmonious accordance all our better powers move on in their proper orbit, then there results inward calm and strength, outward dignity and power. The ruling principles here prevail, — Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. And although these have each its peculiar character, and are directed to peculiar corresponding points in our own being, yet they proceed from one common source, — emphatically the One. Hence they are throughout harmonious, and no mind is brought to a due celestial temper in which they are not equally combined and active. As well might wings rise without dome, or dome without wings, to form a complete edifice, as a mind exist in perfect panoply, without the sense of good or the feeling of beauty; and, however intense either might be, without that full perception of the true, that embraces and thus forms a whole, action would only deviate into error. But I speak according to the manner of men, for the three are, in fact, immutable and inseparable. If not equally combined into a symmetrical whole, then a counterfeit has assumed their sacred names, and under the garb of sanctity an imposter walks forth. Are these merely abstract words, or living, applicable realities? Has not the world been long deceived by these counterfeits, which, under the sacred names of Philosophy, Religion, and Poetry, have claimed the admiration or controlled the conduct of society, and that to extremest evil, rejecting each the other as false or inane? But the philosophy that scouts the good or despises the fair is not the herald of the true; it is but a charlatan, that retails the poor dog-

mas of a temporary expediency, not the sage that propounds laws of eternal duration. Nor is the religion that discards the light of reason the holy light that irradiates the divine temple, as goodness is the altar-fire that warms it, and beauty the incense-clouds that embellish it, or that rejects the gentle and lovely as too soft for its sternness; — is such religion other than a hypocrite, that under a solemn mask conceals darkness and deformity? Poetry, in which beauty is not wedded to the good and the true, is but a dangerous and deceitful siren. In the stillness of the night, listen not to its enticing but effeminate strains, as they float over smooth silvery waters or through flowery thickets or groves of gloom! Look up to the open sky, and the unchanging stars, and through them to the one great Light that shines in the zenith of all, and you will hear a music, sweeter even than that of the spheres, as evolving from the power that rules the spheres, proclaiming in tones of fullest and completest harmony the one great principle of our intellectual and moral existence. Philosophy, Religion, and Poetry sit enthroned, as a Spiritual Triunity, in the shrine of man's highest nature. The perfect vision of all-embracing Truth, the vital feeling of all-blessing Good, and the living sense of all-gracing Beauty, they form, united, the Divinity of Pure Reason."

Suddenly he retired, and left me uncertain whether he had read Richter, or been struck by lunar influence.

A LETTER ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE, ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR, —

The reduction of human knowledge to a few definite heads has been a favorite pursuit of many eminent philosophers. Bacon, Locke, and D'Alembert have particularly given it their attention, and have each presented the world with schemes, evincing, indeed, their usual force of intellect, but which, in the opinion of the best judges, are imperfect. The publication of Judge Woodward's *very learned work*, "Encatholepisthemia," and the consequent reviews in the *Analectic Magazine*, directed my thoughts particularly to that object, although it had often before been the subject of my reflection. That this classification of knowledge is highly useful, no one can deny who considers for a moment that it is universally practised (though in an imperfect manner usually) by every man of

any extensive science. The astronomer and naturalist find it necessary to separate from the mass of knowledge certain particular branches which claim their attention most, and to give these a certain order and arrangement. The physician arranges the various objects of medical inquiry, the divine has his special subjects, and the lawyer his system of legal and political science; at least, this is the case with such as are philosophical in the structure of their minds. There are two kinds of minds which I imagine never form such an arrangement, or at least none of their own, — those who always follow the beaten track of others, who never think for themselves, but who always walk in the leading-strings of greater intellects; and those whose minds have that elegant littleness and that pleasing levity which conducts them into the fields of fancy only, which prompts them to gather but the blossoms of science, and to strew their pages with flowers and brilliants. These last will never take the trouble to methodize their thoughts or arrange their knowledge; they are fully satisfied if they can find a striking comparison or a metaphor that will attract a moment's admiration. Not that these minds are useless in the literary world. They are as necessary to the jaded minds of the mathematician and philosopher, in the intervals of their severe pursuits, as repose to the laborer or football to your younger classes. The world must be pleased and enchanted as well as instructed and convinced. The poet must tune his lyre for them, and the orator raise his voice. The harmony of numbers and the splendor of imagery must charm the palate of the literary epicure; and while the health of his mind is preserved by the plain food of a Locke or a Paley, the feast of soul must be seasoned with the works of a Stewart or a Chalmers. You know that these notions are not new with me; in our collegiate life they often excited some altercations between us, but I hope never opened an impassable gulf. I have no objections to a figure, if it will mingle itself spontaneously with the stream of my thoughts; but I do not wish to bend aside from my natural course to absorb the tributary rill of a metaphor, however sweet or pure its waters may be.

But I have wandered. I began with the arrangement of knowledge, and I will end with the same. I observed that a complete philosophical arrangement would be highly useful. It has never yet been accomplished with full success, and, in the opinion of Stewart, although a *desiderandum*, it is a *desperandum*; but I hope Stew-

art's fears are groundless, and that some genius will hereafter arise who will dispel the darkness, and write in letters of light the true nomenclature of human knowledge.

I observed to you that this arrangement had often been the subject of my reflections. In the intervals of my employments last summer, after the tedious task of tilling an obstinate and barren soil, I directed my thoughts that way and reduced my notions to a sort of system. After I had given it the first and second readings, after I had debated it clause by clause, and added the necessary amendments, I engrossed it and presented it to Mr. Nathaniel Chauncey for his assent. He was pleased to smile upon it his approbation. I have since reconsidered it still further; and in its present state I take the liberty, with your permission, of presenting it to your consideration, satisfied that if it does not meet with a favorable, it will meet with a tender judge; if its excellences are not acknowledged, its defects will be concealed. I begin my work with a division of the sciences, which I have not seen in any author, at least as far as I can recollect, but which, however, I do not claim as original, — it is into primitive and secondary sciences. By the way, I consider all knowledge as properly reducible to science, that is, to general philosophical principles. True it is, we find books which are not systems, and in which no attempt is made at generalization. The descriptive works of the older botanists, in which plants are alphabetically arranged; books of travels, in which facts are set down in the order of their occurrence; medical and law reports, in which cases are promiscuously detailed; statute books, in which acts are arranged in the order of their enactment; poems and belles-lettres, essays, in which elegant thoughts, moral observations, and nice reflections on life and manners are mingled as the fancy or the feeling of the writer dictated; and even the sacred volume itself, — are of such a description. But these are not yet fully formed to meet the philosopher's eye: they are rich chaoses from which every one can draw his own peculiar wealth, and which in this state are far more useful to the great mass of men than if arranged with all the exactness of an Aristotle or a Linné. The world is not a world of philosophers, and hence books calculated for general instruction must be suited to common capacities. Example rather than precept, illustration rather than demonstration, plain truths nicely mingled with attracting narrative, instruction wisely scattered among pleasing details, here a little and there a

little, appeals to the heart and feelings, these are more useful materials for such books than strict definitions and exact demonstrations with all their apparatus of lemmas, corollaries, and scholia. Such is the nature of the sacred volume, and this unrivalled want of system must ever endear it more and more to the lover of religion and human happiness. But such books are among the materials from which systematic knowledge is formed. The theologian studies the Scriptures and combines their doctrines into a regular body; a Blackstone builds the statutes and the reports of common law into an arranged fabric of jurisprudence; a Cullen or Darwin combines the experiences detailed in various writers, as well as their own, into a medical system; the geographer, the antiquary, the naturalist, and the politician make common plunder of the traveller's details; while Aristotle and Home drew the laws of poetics and the elements of criticism from the epopee of Homer and the tragedy of Shakespeare. I make these observations because I would not have you consider me an arranger of books; my object is to give order to the philosophy of knowledge, and in this light I consider books, like the world of nature and of soul, the mine for the philosopher to dig from.

By sciences, then, I understand general philosophical principles, and these alone are capable of arrangement. The mode of arranging them has not yet been settled. Bacon, and after him D'Alembert nearly in his steps, follow the operations of the mind and distinguish the sciences by the faculties chiefly employed in their pursuit. The imagination draws to itself poetry and rhetoric; the reason, natural and moral philosophy; and the memory, natural and civil history.

Others, particularly the French academicians, choose to build their arrangements on the subjects of which the sciences treat; indeed the original arrangement of the National Institute appears to me the best I have yet seen, and I acknowledge it the parent of all my notions on the subject. You will find a sketch of it in a picture of Paris in one of the Society libraries, and another as it was afterwards reformed, or rather deformed, to serve the purposes of Napoleon, in one of the later volumes of the Portfolio, I don't recollect which. Stewart has given it as his opinion that if ever the sciences are well arranged it will be on this basis. In the system, then, with which I have amused myself, I arrange sciences according to the subjects of which they treat, and first into prim-

itive and secondary. Primitive sciences are derived immediately from one division of things; considered apart from the aids in their pursuit, they may be judged independent, at least they have each a root of their own, although their branches may be inseparably intertwined. Secondary sciences are the application of the principles of many primitive sciences to some particular pursuit or object. This distinction may be best illustrated by an example. Chemistry investigates the causes of those motions in inanimate nature perceptible only by their effects. This is its root. Although, in ascending from it, it may call to its aid other sciences, as mechanics, mineralogy, etc., still its root is distinct and can be blended with no other. Agriculture applies chemistry to the investigation of soils, manures, etc.; botany, to the investigation of the growth, food, cultivation, and diseases of plants; anatomy and medicine, to the breeding and diseases of domestic animals; mechanics, to the structure of farm buildings and utensils; political economy, to the adaptation of crops to markets, leases, rents, taxes, bounties, price of labor, etc. I think, if you consider these two sciences, you will find the root of chemistry perfectly its own, and that there is not one set of principles or practice in agriculture which is not derived from some other science of greater simplicity. But in maintaining the individuality of primitive sciences I would understand only their roots. There is none of them but what derives aid in its pursuit from some other. Thus the various branches of mathematics have, as the French say, their *meta-physique*, but the reasoning and calculations can be usually carried on without its aid. Mechanical philosophy in its superstructure is chiefly mathematical. Mineralogy is greatly aided by chemistry and even by mathematics in the study of crystals; while moral philosophy, religion, politics, jurisprudence, and economics are all intimately blended, since they are built mainly on the broad principle of universal happiness.

Some difficulty has arisen in the arrangement of the arts. His Honor, the Judge, has formed a separate division of them, because, says he, "they include the idea of human powers"; and hence he has blended in the same mass, anatomy, medicine, agriculture, painting, dyeing, chirography, and a host of others, to each of which he has given its own new name in full-mouthed Greek. The assemblage reminded me of a rag-fair, or of Shakespeare's "black spirits and white, blue spirits and gray, who mingle, mingle, mingle,

as they may." But his principle was so absurd that he might have blended in the same mass every species of compositions, for human power is requisite in transcribing them. Arts appear to me capable of two points of view : first, as regards their principles ; secondly, their practice. Their principles are merely scientific, and are widely dispersed through the field of knowledge according to the sciences from which they are derived ; their practice is merely the directing our actions according to those principles, and is no more worthy of arrangement among the branches of knowledge, than the manipulations of a chemist are a part of his discoveries. The principles of the arts, then, are the only parts which claim my present attention ; and as these imply no idea of human powers, the Judge's system falls to the ground. These principles are, I believe, altogether secondary sciences. In my system, then, I shall first arrange the primitive sciences, or at least their roots ; then point out their inoscultations ; then arrange the secondary sciences according to their origin, pointing out the primitive sciences on which they are founded ; and lastly point out the applications of the sciences, or rather those secondary sciences which are called arts. I am about to take a Dædalian fright, and perhaps *vitreo daturus nomina ponto*. It may seem presumptuous in me to attempt one of Stewart's *desperanda*, but with your permission I will go on. Your patience may, however, be so exhausted by the discussion, that I shall have "to cry your mercy."

ARRANGEMENT OF THE PRIMITIVE SCIENCES.

I. *Mathematical Science, the Science of Quantity or Magnitude.*

One of the first ideas which we gain of any object is its magnitude if a unit, or the number and magnitude of its parts if compound. Hence, mathematics is not only the clearest and most simple, but one of the earliest sciences. By this I mean its elements, for no extensive science is early. They are the work of long civilization, and some, like chemistry, are but the growth of yesterday. The comparison and combination of quantities are altogether the work of reason. They are merely observations of the relations or ratios of those quantities. The simplest axiom, "the whole is greater than its part," and the first step in addition, "two and two equal four," are ratios. Hence the simplest branch of mathematics is the

general doctrine of ratios ; but ratios can be extended but a little way without certain aids. These are numbers, symbols, and diagrams. Hence I will thus arrange mathematics : —

1. Science of ratios, or general principles of relation.
2. Science of numbers, arithmetic, and logarithms.
3. Science of symbols, algebra, fluxions, analysis in general.
4. Science of diagrams, geometry, conic sections, spherics.

II. *Physical Science, — Science of Material Nature.*

The first objects that excite our thoughts or give us ideas are material objects. The idea of immateriality is much later.

When material objects come under the cognizance of our senses they communicate various ideas, — quantity, shape, color, sound, odor, taste, roughness, weight, and perceptible motion, with its consequent impulse. The simplicity of mere quantity and regular figure, and the great capability of being abstracted, give rise to their separation from other qualities of matter, and their erection into a distinct science, — mathematics. The notion of magnitude and figure must be derived from external objects, but they are applied only in their abstractest forms to mathematics. A few simple definitions and axioms are laid down, and from these are derived that extensive science ; but the other qualities of bodies, being more complex and indefinite, are not, and cannot, become the subject of such strict inquiry as is pursued in mathematics. In considering them the most that can be done is to enumerate them faithfully, and to observe whatever relations we can between them. In motions which are clearly perceptible, we soon discover the exciting cause. In pursuing our inquiries we discover the causes of more obscure motions, and at last we can perceive that qualities whose causes are perfectly hidden from the rude mind are also mere effects of very obscure motions. Hence every quality of bodies becomes but the effect of some cause and that cause a motion. Two things are observable in our study of material objects. We describe their qualities as they affect our senses, and we investigate the causes which produce these qualities. The qualities of bodies may be distributed into two classes, — those which we find constantly and permanently united in the same mass of matter, such as the shape, color, proportions, etc., of a flower or crystal ; and those which are temporary and occasional only, as the flight of birds, the expanding of a flower, or the darkness of

the moon in an eclipse. Whenever we describe an object we do it by enumerating the former qualities; the latter are rarely described but when we investigate their causes. There are also certain motions which are observed, not in one body or a confined class of bodies only, but extending almost universally through nature. These are the motions of the heavenly bodies, the motions derived from impulse, the motions derived from chemical mixture, and those accompanying the birth, growth, decay, and death of all living beings. In describing the objects in which these motions are observed, we do not necessarily take notice of them, but usually consider them only when we investigate their causes.

I would, then, divide physical science into two great divisions: the first treating of the various bodies we observe in nature, and describing those assemblages of qualities which constitute their distinctive characters; the second describing the occasional or general motions in nature, and investigating their causes. This last will also investigate the causes of the permanent qualities of individual bodies, as these qualities are of universal distribution, but are peculiarly combined in every class of bodies or individual.

1. **PHYSICAL HISTORY**, — pure descriptions of the phenomena of material bodies.

1. *Minerals.*

1. External appearance.
2. Internal structure, — crystallography.
3. Relative position in the earth, — geology.

2. *Vegetables.*

1. External appearance, — terminology, systematic botany.
2. Internal structure, — vegetable anatomy.

3. *Animals.*

1. External appearance, — zoölogy.
2. Internal structure, — anatomy, human and comparative.

[The manuscript here breaks off. There is no trace that the subject was ever further pursued.]

APPENDIX E.

(PAGE 294.)

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SILLIMAN'S JOURNAL.

- M**INERALS of Berlin, Vol. V. p. 426.
 Analysis of M. Adolphe Brongniart on Fossil Vegetation,
 VII. p. 178.
 On the Geology and Mineralogy of Sicily, VIII. p. 201.
 On the Zoölogical Characters of Formations, VIII. p. 213.
 Curious Effect of Solar Light, XII. pp. 164, 180.
 Crescent Form of Dikes first observed by, XLVI. p. 205.

APPENDIX F.

(PAGE 300.)

NATURAL HISTORY.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE SABBATH SCHOOL HERALD, NOV., 1830.

NEXT to the consideration of our destiny and duties, few employments are more useful to the young mind than the study of nature, or in more suitable language, of the works of creation and providence. Whether we consider it in its influences on the mind or heart, it will be found not only in the highest degree interesting and attractive, but equally ameliorating and instructive in its tendency. We do not now speak of the simple scientific investigation of natural things, the mere examination of their outward forms and internal organization, or even of the observation of their continued existence and all its manifold phenomena and changes, but rather of their relation to us and their Author. Even the first

method of studying nature, coldly philosophical as it is, is not without its pleasures and attractions, as we see by the intense enthusiasm of those who are devoted to such pursuits, nor is it to be considered an idle play of the mind, without any useful results on the heart and conduct, for whatever employs our intellectual faculties on subjects elevated above moral debasement is in itself a means of purifying the character and giving it a spiritual tendency. We must indeed regret that so many among the first and wisest philosophers have paused as it were on the threshold of nature, without penetrating to the secret shrine of its Maker; but we should do injustice to them and the object of their pursuits if we supposed that their unwearied investigations had no salutary influence on their moral being, or that their irreligion was the result of their philosophy. If we examine their lives and deportment, we shall, in most instances, find that they have been better and more moral, if not more pious and devout, for their studies, and that their irreligion should not be attributed to the tendency of their own peculiar pursuits, but to some unhappy moral influences connected with society and education. True philosophy and true religion are indeed the same. If the one is more intellectual in its character, more a light which irradiates the head and less a fire that warms the heart, it is not for that reason adverse to, or incompatible with, the other. Both are alike the guides that conduct us up from the downward paths of life to the throne of the Deity and the regions where we alone can be happy. They aid and illustrate each other; and while philosophy is quickened and animated by religion, and filled with a devout and living energy, religion is rendered clearer and more certain by philosophy, and saved from the dangers of superstition and misguided enthusiasm.

But in the study of nature we should never forget that these visible things are but the manifestations of the One Invisible. Nature considered as a vast instrument, guided by an Almighty hand, is the perpetual source of the most devout and religious emotions. It then finds an entrance into the heart, and becomes a mover of the finest feelings and affections. The more it is studied the more it reveals of design and order, and the more it displays the presence of the Deity in all his works. Whether we consider the forms of things or the works of creation, or their ever-varying changes or the works of providence, wisdom and benevolence are everywhere presented to us: and while the mind is convinced, the

heart is irresistibly impelled to acknowledge the great Author and Ruler of the universe. We cannot but hope that the prejudices which have existed in so many excellent minds against the study of natural science from its irreligious tendency will no longer find a place with those who have so great opportunities of usefulness, and who may have it so much in their power to correct any improper application of its truths, as the teachers of Sabbath schools. We have long been convinced that our happiness and even our security depend in a great degree on the truths of nature, and that in giving us a revealed and written law, the Deity did not abrogate the law which he had inscribed on our hearts and on the world around us, and we have therefore been anxious that those studies which can alone make known to us that older law should be freed from an odium which in the opinions of many has so long rested upon them. We have known, too, how much peace and innocent pleasure may be derived from those studies, how the mind is diverted from the control of debasing and depressing passions, and how often the heart is touched and warmed by exhibitions of benevolence and wisdom. These considerations have induced us to give some little time to the preparation of a few short articles on the study of Natural History, in its connection with Sabbath-school instruction. We propose to treat of it in its intellectual, moral, and religious bearings. In its intellectual character, we shall consider it as a means of developing and disciplining the understanding; in its moral character, as a corrector of the disposition and affections; and in its religious character, as a source of elevated and devout emotions, by revealing at once the greatness and the kindness of the Deity, in the immensity of his works as a whole, and in the minute design and nice adaptation of parts to their purposes, which pervade every portion of the universe.

APPENDIX G.

(PAGE 337.)

THE PROPER ORDER IN THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES.

WE are very sensible how much unwillingness is generally manifested in adopting any innovation on the established order of things. Habits that have been long cherished become in a manner sacred, no matter whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. Our object, at present, is to recommend certain innovations on some of our habits of education, which are of so long standing that the origin of them passeth remembrance. We allude to the study of the dead languages as a part of early education. We cannot enter into any details on the subject ; but we take the liberty of suggesting a few considerations, which we trust may be of some value.

In the first place, we think the dead languages ought not to be the first studied. They are not the most favorable studies for the improvement of the powers of deduction, because they abound in anomalies, and the young student finds his legitimate conclusions continually contradicted by those irregularities which are the result of custom, the only rule of speech. The exact sciences are the only studies where the just conclusions of the student will always coincide with the real results of his studies. He will never find his decisions, when formed by a regular course of reasoning, contradicted by the unphilosophical habits of those who have gone before him.

They are inferior to the physical sciences, whether descriptive or experimental, in improving the powers of observation, because the latter deal in objects of sense which are definite ; and the former, only in arbitrary signs of such objects, and those often indeterminate in their application.

They are of less value, too, in cultivating the memory than the modern languages akin to our own, because they are less easily understood and less easily associated with real objects, on which the only solid foundations of a good memory are laid. Memory, we conceive, depends primarily on natural and philosophical associa-

tions. It may be improved by arbitrary and unmeaning associations and by forced efforts of attention; but it then becomes an artificial memory, which is always opposed to every natural and useful effort of the mind. It depends on habits which must be forgotten, or the individual is in a great measure unfitted for society.

We conceive the great object to be attained in the study of a language is to attach definite images to every word (not connective), and above all to every phrase and sentence. (Connective words, of course, are visible in the mind's eye only as they are linked with the names of things.)

It is always hard to go from one fixed habit to a new one. We learn our own language early and imperceptibly, by means of natural associations. The structure of our own language becomes then a habit of the mind, and those languages are, of course, most easily learned which most nearly resemble ours in structure. Languages have been divided variously. Some distribute them according as the relations of words are determined by affixes, inflections, or auxiliaries. Now we are inclined to believe that it would not be hard to show that all languages are formed on one principle, and that all affixes and syllables of inflection are only auxiliary words (which once had a definite meaning, now lost) soldered or closely united to the principal words of the language. But this is not to our present purpose. Languages have now a very different aspect to one who has not studied their philosophy, and there is as wide a difference between a language construed by auxiliaries like ours and most of the modern languages of Europe, and those which are construed by inflections, like the Greek and Latin, as if the syllables of inflections in these latter languages were really by themselves arbitrary and unmeaning. To the student they are so to all intents and purposes.

We think it may be laid down as an axiom in education to proceed from the easy to the difficult, from the more to the less intelligible. Of course, in studying languages, we ought to begin with such as are nearest ours in their structure, and then gradually advance to those which are farthest removed.

If it is an object to attain to a good knowledge of the ancient languages, that we may fully enjoy their literary treasures, we conceive it might be best acquired by beginning with the French, the lowest in the scale of descent, then passing to the Italian, then to

the later Latin, then to the Latin of the Augustan age, and finally to the Greek, in the same order. This may be pronounced an inverted order, and that we ought to begin with the root and pass off to the branches; but if so, then we should begin with the Greek, which is considered the root of the Latin, and descend from it in the scale we have mentioned. No one can deny that a child will learn French easier than Latin, even supposing him to follow the same course in each; and if so, the natural order of teaching is the reverse of the order of descent.

APPENDIX H.

(PAGE 425.)

HEXAMETER TRANSLATIONS FROM HOMER.

THE EXORDIUM OF THE ILIAD.

SING, O Goddess, the wrath of Achilles, the son of Peleus,
 Fatal, which on the Greeks sent numberless woes and sorrows,
 Hurling to Hades the souls of many valiant heroes,
 Leaving their corpses a prey to ravens and dogs and vultures.

But the will of Jove was accomplished; from what time Atrides,
 Monarch of men, and noble Achilles, in strife contending,
 First were parted, nor longer united their forces in battle.
 Who of the gods compelled them to join in contention and discord?
 He, the son of Zatona and Jove, he, enraged with Atrides,
 Sent through the army a fatal disease, and it wasted the people.
 Wherefore? Because Atrides dishonored the priest of Apollo,
 Chryses. He came to the swiftly sailing ships of the Grecians,
 Bringing uncounted treasures, the price of his daughter's freedom,
 Holding the crown in his hand, the crown of far-darting Apollo,
 Raised on his golden staff; and thus he entreated the Grecians,
 Most of all the Atridae, the chiefs and lords of the people.

"O, ye sons of Atreus, and all ye well-booted Achæans,
 May the Immortals grant, the gods who inhabit Olympus,
 That you destroy the city of Priam, and safely sail homewards;
 But release me my daughter, and take the ransom I offer,
 Bending before the son of Jove, far-darting Apollo."

Then all the other Achæans applauded the saying of Chryses,
 Willing to honor the priest and take the splendid ransom ;
 Yet it pleased not the son of Agamemnon, Atrides,
 But he foully dismissed him and gave this bltter commandment.

" Let me never find thee, old man, by the hollow vessels,
 Either now delaying, or after again returning,
 Lest the staff may not aid thee, nor yet the crown of Apollo.
 I will not free thy daughter, — no, never, till old age invade her,
 Far away from her native home in my palace, in Argos,
 Where she shall twirl the shuttle, and share my couch as a bondmaid.
 Go, and provoke me not, — and thou wilt return more securely."

Thus he spake. The old man feared and obeyed his commandment.
 Silent he went by the shore of the loud-resounding ocean.
 When he had gone far apart, the old man prayed to Apollo,
 Whom Zatona bore, the goddess with long curling tresses.

" Hear me, thou god of the silver bow, who walkest round Chryse,
 And the holy Cilla, and rulest Tenedos bravely,
 Smintheus. If I have ever crowned thy elegant temple,
 Or if I ever have burnt fat thighs of bulls on thy altar,
 Or of goats, O, hear and accomplish my wishes, Apollo !
 May the Greeks repay my bitter tears with thy arrows."

Thus he spake in prayer ; and Phœbus Apollo heard him.
 Down from the top of Olympus he sprang, his heart waked to fury,
 Holding his bow on his shoulders, and also his well-covered quiver.
 As he rushed in wrath, his arrows rang on his shoulders.
 Then he moved, gloomy as night, and sitting on Callicolone,
 Far away from the ships, he drew and sent forth an arrow.
 Dreadfully twanged the string as the silver bow rebounded.
 First he invaded the mules, and the swift-footed dogs of the army ;
 Then he sent a deadly dart, full aimed at the people,
 And it hit them. The pyres of the dead were incessantly burning.
 Nine long days the shafts of the god flew thick through the army ;
 But on the tenth Achilles called a general assembly.
 Juno, the white-armed goddess, suggested the thought to his spirit,
 For she lamented the Greeks, because she saw them dying.
 When they were all collected, and fully gathered together,
 Then swift-footed Achilles arose, and thus he harangued them.

VARIOUS SIMILES.

Diomedes compared to the Autumnal Star.

Then Athene gave Tydean Diomedes
 Strength of body and soul to raise him among the Grecians,
 First in battle, and give him thereafter conspicuous glory.
 Therefore she kindled unwearied fire on his helmet and buckler,
 Like the autumnal star which shines with the brightest beauty

When it has bathed its light in the rolling waves of ocean,
Driving him into the midst, where the fight and the tumult were thickest.

Iliad, Book V.

The People assembling compared to Bees.

As when the swarms of crowded bees go forth in the spring time,
Always issuing freshly out from the hollow cavern ;
Then in clusters they fly around the vernal blossoms ;
Some flutter hither in hovering clouds, and some flutter thither ;
So from the ships and the tents, the many swarms of the people
Went, with measured march, by the beach of the boundless ocean,
Onward in bands to the mutiny ; among them Ossa was kindred.
She, the herald of Jove, impelled them, and they were assembled.
Then the mutiny resounded, and loud beneath the earth groaned,
As the people sat down in their ranks, and there was a tumult.
Nine loud heralds restrained them and bade them cease from their clamor,
That they might hear the words of the heaven-protected chieftains.
Scarce could the people be seated ; but when they were still in their places,
And when the clamor was silent, arose the king, Agamemnon,
Holding his royal staff, which Vulcan had wrought and labored.
Vulcan gave it to Jove, the King, the son of Saturn ;
Jove then gave the staff to his herald the slayer of Argus ;
Mercury gave it to Pelops, the tamer and breaker of horses ;
Pelops gave it to Atreus, the shepherd and guide of the people ;
Atreus dying bequeathed the gift to the wealthy Thyestes ;
But Thyestes left it behind to be borne by Atrides,
That he might rule over many islands, and govern all Argos.
Leaning on this he stood, and spake winged words to the Grecians.

Book II. 87.

THE PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

Thus spake, and stretched his arms to his son, illustrious Hector ;
But the child shrunk screaming back, and clung to the bosom
Of the fair-zoned nurse, by his father's looks affrighted,
Trembling before the brass and the crest wide-waving with horse-hair,
Seeing it terribly nodding aloft on the top of the helmet.
Then the delighted parents laughed at his infant terrors.
Instant he took his helm from his head, illustrious Hector,
And on the ground he laid it, the helm all bright and shining.
When he had kissed his darling son, and softly waved him,
Then he spoke in prayer to Jove and other Immortals.

“Grant me, Jove, and ye other gods, that my son hereafter,
Even as I am now, be chiefest among the Trojans,

Thus excelling in strength, and Ilium high controlling.
Then at length they may say, "He far surpasses his father,
When from war he returns. May he bear the bloody trophies
Torn from his slaughtered foes, and delight the soul of his mother."

Thus he spake, and laid in the arms of his wife, the beloved,
Softly his child : she folded him close to her fragrant bosom,
Tearfully smiling. Her husband observed her tears, and in pity
Soothed her with gentle hand, and with words of love addressed her.

"Fairest and best, O, grieve not so deep in thy soul for thy Hector !
None shall send him, against his fate, too soon to Hades.
Surely mortal has never escaped what fate has ordained him,
None, whether coward or brave, from the earliest dawn of existence.
But return to thy home, and there attend to thy labor,
Twirling the shuttle and distaff, and also command thy maidens,
That they perform their tasks ; but war is the care and duty,
Sole, of man, and chiefly mine of all the Trojans."

Thus having spoke, he took his helm, illustrious Hector,
Waving with horse-hair. His wife, the beloved, to her home returning,
Often looked back as she went, and in tears poured her passionate sorrows.
Then she speedily came to the well-constructed palace
Of her Hector, the slayer of men, and her many maidens
Found within, and in all excited a loud lamentation.
They aloud bewailed in his palace the loving Hector ;
For they said he would never come, from the fight returning,
Never would come, escaping the wrath and the swords of the Grecians.

Book VI. 466.

FRAGMENTS FROM GREEK AUTHORS.

Sweet mother ! I can weave the web no more, —
So much I love the youth, so much I lingering love.

Sappho.

—
The moon has set, the Pleiades are gone ;
'T is the mid-noon of night ; the hour is by, —
And yet I watch alone.

Sappho.

—
Not mine the boast of countless herds,
Nor purple tapestries, nor treasures gold,
But mine the peaceful spirit,
And the dear muse, and pleasant wine
Stored in Bœotian urns.

Bacchylides.

As late I wove a garland
Love lurked amid the roses ;
I took him by his wings
And bathed him all in wine,
And then I drained the bowl ;
And now in every vein
I feel his quivering wings.

Julian, Egypt.

Would that I were a beautiful lyre,
And that beautiful children bore me
To the Dionysian dance.
Would that I were a beautiful golden vase.
And a beautiful woman bore me,
All pure in her soul.

Anonymous.

Hither and thither the waves are rolling,
And me in the black ship amidst them,
Onward are tossing and driving,
With a strong, mighty tempest contending.
The sea fills the hold round the foot of the mast ;
The sails wide rent in tatters,
Away on the winds are flying,
And loosened the anchors.

Alcæus.

APPENDIX I.

(PAGE 426.)

A SLAVONIC EXCERPT.

FROM THE CHURCH CHRONICLE FOR MARCH 7, 1841.

MR. EDITOR, — I offer you, as perhaps not unfitted for a place in your paper, the following literal version of Derzhavin's celebrated Ode to God (*Bog*), which some years since excited not a little interest in the translation, published by Bowring, in the First Part of his Russian Anthology, and from that copied by Pierpont into his First Class Book. This Ode has been regarded by the Russians as one of the first efforts, if not the very first effort, of their greatest poet, and has been generally diffused by translation, even among the Chinese and Japanese. It would be hazarding little to say that, among secular compositions, it has hardly been equalled in energy, sublimity, purity, and fervor. Such, at least, is the character of the original. The author, in his life, strikingly illustrates the peculiar position of the Literary Character, in Russia, as an appendage of its all-absorbing autocratical government. Born in a remote province of the empire (Kasan), he received a military education, which he completed in the Imperial Gymnasium, and after having been first enrolled in the engineer service, he was transferred, as a reward for distinction, particularly in the mathematics, to the ranks of one of the regiments of Guards (1761). In this service, he rose through successive gradations, till 1784, when he was transferred to the civil service, in which he pursued the same graduated ascent, during the reigns of Catharine II. and Paul, till he was raised to the Ministry of Justice by Alexander (1802), soon after which he retired on full allowance, as a reward for his long and distinguished services, and was thus enabled to devote the evening of his life, till his death, in 1816, to those literary pursuits which have rendered his name the common property of all cultivated minds. Though thus, through his whole life, the servant and pensioner of the Imperial Government, he yet, by the peculiar force and elevation of

his genius, raised himself above all local and selfish influences, and gave to his poetical efforts that impress of natural and universal feeling which renders them as effective in moving the heart and rousing the spirit of man on the prairies of the Missouri as on the plains of the Wolga, which renders him, in the language of Prince Wiazemsky, in his Eulogy, the poet of all ages and all nations. This universal character of his genius is fully appreciated by the Russians. In the language of the same writer, he is the poet of life and nature, withdrawn from himself into the common world of man, the living painter of realities, who gives to all he touches its full and appropriate glow, hue, and action, and that with a strength and fire which reaches, through all exterior envelopes, the universal sentiment of the beautiful, the great, and the good. Derzhavin is peculiarly distinguished as a lyric poet, devotional, didactic, and anacreontic, in all which classes of the ode he has been almost equally distinguished. His forte, however, is the moral and reflective sublime, as exhibited in the Ode here translated, which, with his vivid representation, has given him, in the Eulogy of Wiazemsky, the title of Philosophic, as well as Painter Poet (*Philosoph, Zhivopisets, Poet*). His earliest poetical effort was an ode, written while sergeant in the Guards, and to the ode he continued to devote his best efforts, as if conscious that there lay his peculiar strength and prowess. The Ode here selected, from the majesty and unity of its subject, as well as the force of its execution, is generally considered his masterpiece; yet some give the preference to his Waterfall (*Wodopad*), also translated by Bowring, an allegorical, but more desultory picture of life, characterized as well by its depth of reflection, as its vividness of representation, "in which," says Wiazemsky, "all breathes a wild and fearful beauty, in which poetry has vanquished painting, but where, unfortunately, there is a want of unity in arrangement, that evinces, what is said to have been the fact, that the poem was composed of fragments, written at different periods." The present Ode exhibits a peculiar combination of Scriptural solemnity and reflective sublimity, with rapid energy of movement. The first trait is aided by the style, which is rendered more solemn by the use of words and forms peculiar to the Old Slavonic, the language of the Scriptures and Liturgy of the Russian Church. The peculiar movement, aside from the condensed style, arises from the peculiar character of the verse, an octosyllabic iambic, in stanzas of ten lines,

with alternations of double and single rhymes, or technically speaking, of hypercatalectic and acatalectic verses. The stately movement of the iambic, combined with the shortness of the verse, and the alternate rebounding and full close of the lines, leads to a union of dignity and impetuousness scarcely attainable in English versification, from the difficulty of using double rhymes. I have, however, attempted a metrical version of one stanza (the fifth, the most picturesque in its character) as nearly as possible in the measure of the original. . . .

Bowring, in his translation, has selected a decasyllabic iambic verse (the English heroic), and omitted the double rhymes, but reduced the stanza to nine lines, thus adding four syllables to the stanza. The greater length, with the uniform full accented close of the lines, gives to his verse a certain heaviness and monotony of movement, but at the same time a larger swell, perhaps not unsuited to the change he has wrought in the character of the poem. His translation I should regard as more formal and stately, less direct and impressive; indeed, compared with the simple energy of the original, inflated and declamatory. The Russian language like its near relative, the Polish, is an inflected and derivative language; hence it expresses the relations of thought with fewer words, more directly, and less paraphrastically than a language like ours. It abounds too in long words of inflection, much like those of the ancient Greek, by which it can complete its measures, without using words superfluous to the meaning. In translating from such a language into the English, fewer syllables should be used in each line or stanza, if one wishes to convey the meaning of the original without addition or inflation. Bowring, by taking a contrary course, has been compelled to give rather a paraphrase than a close and just translation. The same was remarked by a critic at the time, of Wiffen's Translation of Tasso, in which he had rendered the eight-lined stanza (*Ottava Rima*) of the less condensed Italian, into the nine-lined Spenserian stanza, with its concluding Alexandrine, in the more condensed English. By comparing one of Bowring's stanzas with the corresponding stanza of the literal version below, the applicability of my remarks will be better perceived. For this purpose I have selected the third stanza. One need only read the stanza of Bowring here inserted to see how far he has deviated from the original.

"Thou from primeval nothingness didst call
 First Chaos, then existence ;—Lord ! on Thee
 Eternity had its foundation : — all
 Sprung forth from Thee : — of light, joy, harmony,
 Sole origin :— all life, all beauty Thine.
 Thy word created all, and doth create ;
 Thy splendor fills all space with rays divine.
 Thou art, and wert, and shall be ! Glorious ! Great !
 Light-giving, life-sustaining Potentate ! "

There are shades of meaning in the original of this stanza, which I could not well express in my literal version. The author has here apparently labored to give the most enlarged idea of the eternity of the Deity, and for this purpose has exhausted the resources of his language. The four first lines might be rendered : "the temporary * (for a limited period or point of time †) Present ‡ of Chaos, Thou calledst forth from the abysses of Eternity ||; but Eternity, born before time (indefinite) § was, Thou establishedst (didst found) in Thyself." Here the duration of chaos, itself indefinitely longer than that of creation in its formed state, and which may be regarded as preceding and following the latter, surrounding its indefinitely small sphere with its own comparatively unlimited orb, is considered in relation to eternity as but a momentary present, a point only. But this eternity, which existed before the commencement of the longest conceivable duration of time, (*wiek*, the correlative of the Greek *αἰών*, as *wremia*, limited time, is of *καίρος*, and which governed by the preposition *w*, into (with the accusative) (*wwiek*), signifies forever, as in the last line of the present stanza,) even this eternity, in relation to the Deity, had its birth, and was created or established by Him in Himself. To the fifth and sixth lines of this stanza, I have given both a free and a literal version ; the latter included in parenthesis, more distinct, but less energetic than the former.

The fourth line of the ninth stanza may perhaps excite surprise, from the singularity of its expression. The translation, here given, is, I believe, a literal rendering of the original, "Czerta naczalna Bozhestwa." Man is here regarded as the passage from the material to the Divine ; the point where the former terminates, and the latter commences ; animal in body ; in soul and intellect,

How like a God !

* *Dowremennu*. † *Wremia*. ‡ *Bytnost*. || *Wiecznost*. § *Wiek*.

Adopting the Scriptural idea, that man is made in the Divine image, Derzhavin has here used the language of art, and represented man as the first line or stroke in delineating the portrait of Deity. The expression, if too affected for the occasion, is at least strongly significant.

In the specimens of the Russian and Slavonic here given, I have adopted the Polish orthography, in which most of the sounds of their peculiar alphabets can be given by the common English type, and that without as unsightly a display of consonants as if the English orthography were adopted. There is one slight circumstance connected with the name of our author which, from its happy adaptedness to the character of his genius, is not unworthy of notice, namely, its apparent etymology, from *derzhawa*, power, with the termination *in*, one of those belonging to proper names, and designating country, condition, or calling.

J. G. P.

GOD.

O Thou, infinite in extent ;
 Vital mover of existence ;
 'Mid the flight of time eternal ;
 Without person, in three persons, Godhead !
 Spirit, everywhere existing, and yet one ;
 To whom there is no place nor cause ;
 Whom none can comprehend ;
 Who fillest all with Thyself,
 Embracest, establishest, upholdest all ;
 Whom we call — God !

A lofty intellect
 May measure the deep ocean,
 Count the sands and the planets' rays, —
 But for Thee there is no weight nor measure !
 Enlightened spirits,
 Born of Thy light,
 Cannot search out Thy judgments ;
 Thought hardly ventures to ascend towards Thee,
 Ere it is lost in Thy greatness,
 Like a moment dissolved in eternity.

The momentary existence of Chaos
 Thou calledst forth from the abysses of Eternity ;
 But Eternity, born before time was,
 In Thyself thou establishedst :

Self formed (*forming Thyself of Thyself*),
 Self radiant (*shining from Thyself with Thyself*),
 Thou light, whence light flowed ;
 Who hast created all by Thy word alone ;
 Who outspreadest Thyself in new creation ;
 Thou wert, Thou art, Thou shalt be forever !

The chain of being Thou embracest in Thyself,
 Sustainest, and animatest ;
 Thou linkest end with beginning,
 And blindest life with death.
 As sparks are scattered and fly,
 So suns are born of Thee ;
 As in a cold, bright winter's day,
 Atoms of ice twinkle,
 Revolve, undulate, shine :
 So stars in the abysses beneath Thee.

Millions of kindled lights
 Float in immensity ;
 They fulfil Thy laws,
 And pour vivifying rays.
 But those fiery lamps,
 Whether piles of glowing crystals,
 Or boiling heaps of golden billows,
 Or burning ethers,
 Or shining worlds,
 All are together before Thee — as night before day.

Like a drop sunk in the sea,
 In all this firmament before Thee.
 But what is the Universe visible to me ?
 And what before Thee am I ?
 In yonder aerial ocean,
 Multiply worlds, a hundred-fold,
 By million other worlds,
 And that, if I venture to compare it with Thee,
 Will be scarce a point,
 And I before Thee — nothing !

Nothing — but Thou shinest in me
 With the majesty of Thy goodness ;
 In me Thou imagest Thyself,
 As the sun, in a little drop of water.
 Nothing — but I feel life ;
 With insatiate flight,
 I ever soar aloft ;
 My soul hopes that Thou art ;
 Inquires, reflects, decides.
 I am — Thou surely art !

Thou art ! — The order of nature announces,
 My heart declares it to me ;
 My reason assures me,
 Thou art — and already I am not nothing !
 I, a particle of the whole universe ;
 I, placed, meseems,
 In that honorable mean of existence,
 Where Thou didst end corporeal creatures,
 Where Thou begannest celestial spirits,
 And didst link the chain of all being by me.

I, bond of worlds everywhere existing ;
 I, last step of the material ;
 I, middle point of the living,
 Initial stroke of Godhead :
 I, by my body, moulder in dust ;
 By my intellect, command the thunder :
 I lord, I slave — I worm, I God !
 But I, who am so wonderful,
 Whence derived ? — I know not ;
 But by myself I could not be.

Thy creature I — Creator !
 I creation of Thy all-wisdom,
 Source of life, Giver of good,
 Soul of my soul, and Lord !
 Thy truth required,
 That my immortal being
 Should cross the mortal abyss ;
 That my spirit should be clad in mortality,
 And that through death I should return,
 Father ! — to Thy immortality.

Inexplicable ! Incomprehensible !
 I know that the imaginations
 Of my soul are too weak
 Even to sketch Thy shadow !
 But if we must sing Thy praise,
 Then it is not possible for feeble mortals
 To honor Thee with aught else,
 Than just to rise towards Thee,
 Be lost in measureless complexity,
 And pour grateful tears.

CHAMOUNY AT SUNRISE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREDERICA BRUN.

From the deep shade of the silent pine grove
Trembling I see thee, Crown of Eternity,
Dazzling Peak, from whose lofty summit
Longing my spirit sweeps on through immensity !

Who sank the column deep in the womb of earth,
That firm has propped thy mass for long thousand years ?
Who heaved aloft in the vault of ether
Mighty and bold thy radiant forehead !

Who poured you high from the empire of endless snow,
Ye streams of jagged ice, down with the thunder's din ?
Who loud commanded with voice of Omnipotence :
"Here shall repose the stiffened billows !"

Who pointed yonder his path to the morning star ?
Who crowns with flowers the rim of eternal frost ?
To whom in terrible harmonies echo,
Savage Arveiron, thy roaring billows ?

Jehovah ! Jehovah ! cracks in the bursting ice :
The lawin's thunder rolls it deep down the gulf.
Jehovah ! sweeps through the gilded forest ;
Jehovah ! murmurs the rippling silver brook.

The excerpts, of which the above are specimens, with his numerous translations, would easily fill a volume, and I trust the time may come when they will all be given to the public.

APPENDIX J.

(PAGE 467.)

THE ALUMNI HYMN.

LINES SUNG AT THE MEETING OF THE YALE COLLEGE ASSOCIATION OF ALUMNI, AUGUST 17, 1842.

TUNE, — *Lenox*.

ONCE more we here unite,
 Who long dispersed have been ;
 O how it glads the sight,
 To see old Yale again !
 Let us conspire,
 With heart and hand,
 To raise still higher
 Our early friend.

Beneath these classic shades
 We mused on ancient lore.
 That knowledge dimly fades,
 Yet Memory brings her store
 To cheer us now,
 As face to face
 The scenes of youth
 We fondly trace.

Our *Alma Mater* calls
 Her scattered sons to meet
 Once more within her halls,
 Around the master's seat.
 Let hearts now flow
 In words of fire,
 Our first, best friend
 Must rise still higher !

Our *Alma Mater* first
 Was meant to form divines.
 Here many a soul was nursed
 That now in glory shines.
 Here Stiles and Dwight
 First learned to soar,
 Here won that fame
 That fades no more.

The Healing Art now finds
Her *Pia Mater* here ;
Her *Dura Mater* Law
Here meets with reverent fear.

Yet still within,
With mild control,
The Classics keep
The seat of soul.

Here Science too has found
A true and genial home ;
Around this sacred ground
The Muses love to roam.

All interests here
May well combine
One *union* wreath
Of hearts to twine.

Honor to Mother Yale:
She must forever stand,
Though other lights should fall,
The sunlight of our land.

Sons of that light
With zeal conspire,
As one unite
To raise her higher !





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